JEWETT
ON
BAPTISM

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THE

MODE AND SUBJECTS

OF

BAPTISM.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages were originally prepared without any reference to publication. At the earnest solicitation of his brethren, the writer has consented to commit his views to the press. He has presented the reasonings on the subject, as they have passed before his own mind, freely availing himself of the labors of others, and endeavoring, with candor and fairness, to state and examine the arguments of those who have written on the other side. Having diligently studied, in the course of the investigation which resulted in his present convictions, numerous Pedo-baptist writers,—critics, commentators, and divines, and having also acquainted himself with the works of the more recent Baptist writers, the author ventures to hope, these discourses will show *the present state of the controversy in this country.*

The works to which the most frequent reference has been made in the preparation of these Sermons, are Rip-

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ley's Examination of Stuart, the Christian Review, the treatise of Carson, Sermons of the late Dr. Davis of Hartford, Ct., Judson's Sermon, Professor Stuart's article in the Biblical Repository, Dr. Bloomfield's Greek Testament with English Notes, Barnes' Notes, and Robinson's Lexicon of the New Testament.

The Lexicon just named, being, in the main, a correct exposition of the text, will ever be regarded by the Baptist student of the original Greek, as a standard work.

The *spirit* exhibited in the treatise of Carson is not to be commended: his reasoning, however, is *unanswerable.*

The author desires particularly to acknowledge his obligations to the Examination of Stuart, by Prof. Ripley; and to the Christian Review, edited by Prof. Sears. No one should read Prof. Stuart's essay, without following it with the Examination, a work exhibiting a liberality of feeling, an acuteness of criticism, and a cogency of argument, which must inspire esteem and command respect, if they do not enforce conviction.

From the Review, the opinions of the German critics have been mostly derived, and the examination of the ancient Fathers is to be referred to the same source. This periodical is published under the auspices of the Baptist denomination, and its pages furnish conclusive proof of the learning and ability of its conductors. It is destined to confer upon the denomination incalculable benefits, and

should be possessed, not only by all our ministers, but by the laity too.

In stating the grounds on which the baptism of infants is supported, resort has usually been had to the Lectures of the Rev. Leonard Woods, D. D., the writer's venerated and beloved instructer in theology.

It would be a source of deep regret to the writer, should there be found in *the spirit* of these discourses, any thing meriting condemnation. If he knows his own heart, he cherishes towards the brethren with whom he was formerly connected, the warmest Christian affection. Having been uniformly happy in his church relations, and that happiness having suffered no interruption by his conscientious withdrawal from his Pedo-baptist associates, the writer has yet to learn, that an honest difference of opinion among Christians, is incompatible with the charity inculcated by the gospel.

With fervent prayers, that this humble effort may promote the cause of truth and piety, the author desires to commit it to the great Head of the church.

February, 1839.

INTRODUCTION.

EXTRACTS OF A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CHANGE OF VIEWS, AND WRITTEN A FEW DAYS AFTER HIS BAPTISM.

Marietta College, June 28, 1838.

* * * * * * * "Perhaps you know I have preached for about two years past to a Presbyterian church in the country. Some eighteen months ago, an elder of that church became a Baptist. On the occasion of his baptism, a sermon was preached by Rev. Hiram Gear, the Baptist minister in Marietta. This sermon disturbed several members of my church, and the session requested me to preach on baptism, in reply. I declined, saying, the best way to manage the excitement was, totally to disregard it; pleading my duties in college, &c. Soon the session ap-

plied to me a second time, insisting that I *must* preach on the subject; several members of the church were in trouble, and *a discourse must be delivered.* Finding that the interest in the subject was not likely to die by *neglect* on my part, I told the church I would prepare a discourse as soon as practicable, and begged them to remain quiet, till they should hear what I might have to say.

Thus compelled to write, I determined to go into an original investigation of the whole matter, proceeding just as if I had never heard or read any thing on either side, and endeavoring with a spirit of candid and prayerful inquiry, to seek after the mind of Christ. I began my researches, by reading Professor Stuart on *βαπτίζω*,, the ablest Pedo-baptist work on the philology of the subject. The inquiry was, *What does Christ mean*, when he commands his ministers *to baptize*? I was soon astonished to find in Stuart's investigation, proof so strong that the word in its literal, ordinary sense, universally means *to immerse, plunge*, or *dip*. It looked as if, with this fact before him, the learned Professor ought to have become a Baptist. I was alarmed, and would have given up the inquiry, but could

not. I laid aside Stuart, and entered upon an investigation of the original Scriptures, relative to the language used respecting the ordinance. I also examined Josephus, and the classics, so far as I had the means. The further I prosecuted my inquiries, the stronger was the evidence, in favor of Baptist views. Thus passed some months. The people had become tired of asking after my sermon on baptism, but my conscience would not now suffer me to abandon the investigation. I therefore continued to apply to it, as other duties permitted, all my powers, till I was compelled to admit, as a philologist and interpreter of the Bible, that *immersion, and that only, is the baptism which Christ enjoins.*

Afterwards I took up infant baptism, and here I found myself in clouds and darkness. I wandered about in the fogs with which writers have shrouded the Abrahamic covenant, the connection between the Old and the New dispensations, the substitution of modern for ancient rites and ordinances, the obscure passages of Ecclesiastical History, bewildered and perplexed—all, as I now believe, because I would not trust to the WORD OF GOD, to guide me to GOD'S INSTITUTIONS. I conver-

sed with my Pedo-baptist friends, I prayed, and wept, and groaned. I would lay down the subject for weeks, then resume it, till, some three or four months ago, I was obliged in the fear of God to conclude, that none, but *believers in Jesus, have a right to the ordinances of Jesus.*

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

* * * * I lay no claim to infallibility, but if I am wrong, I am *conscientiously* so—I am so after a most laborious and protracted search for truth. I have acted also in opposition to all the prejudices of early years—of classical and theological study ; prejudices confirmed by twelve years' connection with a Pedo-baptist church, during six of which I acted as a minister of Christ. And not only my church relations, but all my literary associations, my family connections, and my temporal interests, have combined to withhold me from the result to which I have come. These I cheerfully sacrifice to my convictions of truth and duty."

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Yours, &c."

BAPTISM.

THE MODE.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. 28: 19.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had finished the work assigned him on the earth, and was about to ascend to the right hand of the Majesty on high, he addressed the apostles in the words of the text,—thus charging them with the great duty of making disciples of all nations, and of introducing them into the visible church by the ordinance of baptism. "Go, teach"—or, more in conformity with the original,—*make disciples* or Christians of—"all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, &c—i. e. into subjection and obedience to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is the GRAND COMMISSION, under which the ministers of Christ, in every age, have gone forth, preaching the glad tidings of salvation. This is the great LAW of the

church, as Baxter calls it, under which the heralds of the cross are every where, and throughout all generations, to organize the churches of Christ, and receive men to the privileges of the Christian communion. This being the case, we should naturally expect to find the words of the commission clear and decisive both as to *the persons who* should be enrolled among Christians, and as to *the manner in which* they should be initiated into the company of the disciples. On both these points, we should expect the will of the Founder of Christianity to be clearly made known; and we should anticipate, that the instructions given by the Divine Author of the Christian system for the organization of the church, would be so plain, and so precise, that his ministers, acting as his agents and representatives, could not easily mistake their duty. But, unhappily, however intelligible may have been the directions of our Saviour in the estimation of those to whom the language of the commission was originally addressed, and however uniform their practice, there has existed for many centuries a diversity of sentiment in this matter. Some maintain, that *the baptized infant children* of believers are proper members of the church of Christ; and that the ordinance of baptism is duly observed, by the application of water *in any manner*, and to any extent, however limited: while others believe, that the Scriptures represent *the immersion of a professed believer* in the name of

the Trinity, and *that only*, to be Christian baptism.

Having, after a protracted, and I trust, prayerful and impartial examination of the whole subject, been led to embrace the latter view, I proceed to give some reasons for believing it agreeable to the Scriptures of truth.

The first question which presents itself to our consideration is this, WHAT IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM? Observe, the question does not relate to any *mode* of baptism; it is *not*, whether baptism may, or may not, be performed, in this or that *manner:* the question is, *what is baptism itself?*

The position which I shall endeavor to sustain in this discourse, is this: *the immersion of the subject in water is* ESSENTIAL *to the ordinance.*

I. This is evident, in the first place, FROM THE MEANING OF THE TERMS which Christ uses, when he enjoins the rite of baptism. "Go, teach all nations, BAPTIZING them," &c. The Greek for baptizing is, *βαπτίζοντες*, a participle of the verb *βαπτίζω (baptizo)*. This word is derived from *βάπτω (bapto)*, which primarily means to *dip*, *plunge*, or *immerse*, into any thing liquid. For its secondary signification, *βάπτω* has *to dye*, a signification growing out of the primary idea, inasmuch as dyeing was originally performed by *dipping* the thing to be dyed, into the coloring matter. Hence, the word in the first instance, was used to designate dyeing by DIPPING, and afterwards

the signification was extended so as to denote dyeing *in any manner*. But it is only the primary sig ification of *βάπω*, *to dip, plunge, immerse*, nwhich I am to notice because it is in this signification only, that it modifies *βαπτίζω*. This is apparent, from the facts, that *βάπω is never applied to the ordinance of baptism*, and *βαπτίζω* never signifies *to dye*. *Βάπω (bapto)*, then, has two meanings, the primary, *to dip;* the secondary, *to dye*. *Βαπτίζω (baptizo)*, in the whole history of the Greek language, has but one meaning. It signifies to *dip* or *immerse*, and *never has any other meaning*. Each of these words, therefore, has a specific province, into which the other cannot enter; while there is a common province in which either of them may serve. Either of them may signify to dip, generally; but the primitive cannot specifically express that ordinance to which the derivative has been appropriated ; and the derivative cannot signify to *dye*, which is a part of the province of the primitive.

That both of these words mean *to dip, plunge, immerse*, "ALL LEXICOGRAPHERS AND CRITICS OF ANY NOTE ARE AGREED," says Prof. Stuart. If any person is disposed to question this, he can satisfy himself by examining places in which the words occur in the Greek. Out of about *two hundred* passages, taken at random, where these words are employed in their primary and proper sense, the idea is, *in every instance, to dip, plunge*, or *immerse*. I

have already remarked, that in addition to these significations, *βάπτω* means *to dye, color*, or *tinge;** and *βαπτίζω* signifies *only to immerse, dip*, or *plunge*. I here repeat the remark, that in its *literal* and *proper* sense, *βαπτίζω never means any thing but to immerse, dip*, or *plunge;* and when used in a *figurative* application, the figure entirely depends for its force and beauty, on the primary idea of immersion or plunging. If erroneous, these positions can easily be disproved by a reference to the original classics. But adding my own labors to those of the writers whose works I have examined, I have never been able to discover a single passage which authorizes me to abandon the ground just taken.

That this view is correct beyond debate, will appear from the fact, that many learned men among the Pedo-baptists themselves, have been compelled to acknowledge, that *immersion* is the *exclusive* signification of *βαπτίζω*.

Buddaeus. "The word *βαπτίζειν* is *always* to be interpreted of immersion."

Alstidius. "*βαπτίζειν* signifies *only* to immerse.'

Altingius. "For baptism is *immersion*, when the whole body is immerged: but the term baptism is *never* used with respect to sprinkling.'

* "The lake was *tinged* with his blood." Homer's Battle of the Frogs,—where *βαπτω*, not *βαπτίζω*, is used.

Beza. "Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word, it is certain, immersion is signified. To be baptized in water, signifies *no other*, than to be *immersed* in water."

Martin Luther. Speaking of children, he says, "they ought to be *completely immersed, for the etymology of the word (baptism) evidently requires it.*"

Casaubon. "This was the rite of baptizing, that persons *were plunged* into the water: which the *very word βαπτίζειν sufficiently declares.*"

Dr. George Campbell, a Scotch Presbyterian, who has given us a valuable translation of the Gospels, with learned critical notes. "The word *βαπτίζειν*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to *dip*, to *plunge*, to *immerse. It is always construed suitably* to *this meaning.*"

Stourdza, a native Greek. "*βάπτω* has but one signification. It signifies literally and invariably to *plunge.*"

Buttmann, in his Larger Grammar, simply puts down, "*βαπτω*, to *immerse.*"

Augusti. "The word, baptism, according to *etymology* and *usage*, signifies to *immerse, submerge*, &c., and *the choice of the word betrays an age in which the late custom of sprinkling had not been introduced.*"

Bretschneider. "*An entire immersion* belongs to the nature of baptism. *This is the meaning of the word.*" This writer is confessedly the most critical lexicographer of the New Testament.

Having thus shown, that *βαπτίζω (baptizo)* means, in its proper sense, ONLY to dip, plunge, or immerse, I can by no means escape the conclusion, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in giving his commission, INTENDED to make IMMERSION ESSENTIAL to baptism.

But there are individuals who are not convinced by the proof already adduced. In spite of the authority of lexicons, in opposition to the evidence of numberless examples cited from the original Greek, and notwithstanding the concessions of the most eminent critics, and even of learned and candid Pedobaptists themselves, many persons insist, that the significations above given to *βαπτίζω*, are not the exclusive meanings of the word. They admit, that the native and ordinary force of the word points us to immersion as its general meaning, but they suppose it is sometimes used in other senses. Now, although I believe these individuals confound the original and proper *meaning* of the term, with various *figurative applications* of it, yet I am willing to meet them on their own ground; for I contend, that even on their own principles, *immersion* is necessary to Christian baptism. Well may our brethren admit, that in its primary and general acceptation, the term in question designates immersion, for in this, as Prof. Stuart says, "all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed," and no Greek scholar will hazard his reputation so far as to deny it. This, then, being admitted, the

question is, did Christ, in the words of the commission, employ this term *in its usual and proper sense?* Is there any thing in the sacred record to suggest the idea of the slightest departure from that sense? No man will pretend to assert it. The commission is in the style of plain, narrative discourse, and there is no more reason for supposing tho word translated "*baptize*" to be used out of its ordinary sense, than for conjecturing that the word translated "*teach,*" is turned aside from its customary meaning. If our Saviour, then, employed words in their usual sense, he did say, "Go, make disciples of all nations, IMMERSING them in the name of the Father," &c. What right then, has any man to call any thing besides immersion, baptism? What right has he to presume, that *any application* of water will be acceptable to the Divine Author of this ordinance? Where does he find liberty to suppose immersion is not *the thing* enjoined in the commission, but only *one of various modes* of doing the thing? If words have *any* meaning, and if our Saviour employed the words of the commission in their *ordinary* and *proper* sense, then, on their own principles, my brethren must acknowledge, that *nothing* but immersion is Christian baptism.

Here I might stop, and require those who dissent from the above conclusions, to show, that there is something in some passage of Scripture, something in the practice of Christ, or of the apostles, which evidently *compels us*

to depart from the ordinary signification of the word under consideration. Having clearly ascertained the meaning of that word, and having every reason to believe Christ used it in its appropriate sense, we are not at liberty, in any case, to depart from that sense, unless it is evidently *impossible* that in that case it should have its usual signification.

As the principle of interpretation here involved is of great importance, I may be allowed to illustrate it by a familiar example. I give to A. B. a promissory note, payable "*on demand.*" Now, I am bound to pay the note *whenever presented;* and I cannot plead, that the words "on demand" should be liberally construed; that certain circumstances make it *probable*, they are not used in their ordinary sense. The holder will justly urge, that these words have a definite and well-ascertained meaning, and I must satisfy his claim *forthwith*, unless I can show it is *impossible*, that in my case the phrase should be understood according to its usual signification. The burden of proof lies on me, and I must make it evident beyond dispute, that the terms *cannot possibly* have the customary sense, or I shall be obliged to liquidate the debt.

So in the case before us. It is not enough that there are apparent *improbabilities* opposed to the customary use of the term in question; the ordinary force of it must be plainly *impossible*, or we must retain its usual sense. But no such impossibility exists. On the

contrary, the circumstances under which the word is employed in the Scriptures, the figurative applications of the term, and the practice of the entire church for several centuries after the Christian era, afford confirmation strong, that immersion is the baptism prescribed by the great Head of the church. I proceed therefore to remark,

II. That THE PLACES SELECTED FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCE, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE INSTANCES IN WHICH IT IS PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED, clearly indicate immersion.

"John the Baptist did baptize in the wilderness, * * * * and there went out unto him all the land of Judea, * * * * and were all baptized of him *in the river of Jordan.*" Here it is expressly asserted, that those who resorted to John, were baptized by him *in the river* Jordan. Now, even if, as some contend, the preposition εν [*in*] may be rendered *at*, yet why should John go to the river at all, "excepting that immersion was practised?" * But Prof. Robinson, a Pedo-baptist, and the learned author of the Lexicon of the New Testament, translates the Greek particle, *in* or *into*, in all the instances in which John's baptism is spoken of. Christ was baptized *in Jordan;* or, as Prof. Robinson translates, "INTO *the river Jordan.*"†

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* Prof. Stuart.

† Vide Lex. on the word βαπτίζω, 2. (*a*). So Bloomfield, note upon the passage.

When John was baptizing in Enon, it is expressly stated, that he chose that place, *on account of the facilities there found for baptizing*, John 3: 23. "And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, *because* there was much water there: and they came and were baptized."

The sense of the passage is plain and obvious, and, controversy out of the question, no difficulty could have been raised on it. But it has been asserted, that the Greek words rendered "much water," being in the plural, should be translated, *many waters*, and then the meaning would be, John resorted to this place, because there were there *many streams* or rivulets, which would accommodate the people and their animals. Suppose it were admitted, that the words should be so rendered, yet it would still remain true, that John *baptized* in Enon, *because* there were many streams there, and the people came and were *baptized*—not, were *accommodated*. But the translation in our version is correct, and not to be discarded.* See Jer. 41: 12, compared with 2 Samuel 2: 12, 13, 14. On which read Robinson's Calmet, under the word GIBEON. Also, consult Rev. 1: 5, 19: 6, where the same words are used to designate *the ocean*.

The passage which next claims our attention under this head, is found in Acts 8: 36—

* So Olshausen, De Wette, Kuinoel, Grotius, Bloomfield, and others.

39. It relates to the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip. "As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water, * * * * and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."

Now, here I ask, as before, *why* did Philip and the eunuch *go down both into the water*, if it were not that he might *immerse* him? But it is said, the preposition here rendered *into* is often translated *to*, and it may be read, they went down both *to* the water. But I ask again, why did they even go *to* the water, if an immersion were not to be performed? It is customary in eastern countries for travelers to carry supplies of water with them. Especially would this be true of a person of rank, like the eunuch, who would doubtless have a train of attendants, and would be furnished with water abundantly sufficient for sprinkling or pouring. Why, then, did the eunuch wait, as they rode along, till they came unto *a certain water*? And why, when arrived at that body of water, did they alight from the chariot, and go down both into, or even *to*, the water? It is difficult to answer these questions except by admitting immersion in this case. But the criticism on the Greek preposition is destitute of foundation.*

* Consult Ripley's Examination of Stuart: Boston, 1833. Also Robinson's Lexicon, *Καταβαίνω*, (*a*) *Ἀναβαίνω*, (*a*). Likewise Doddridge, on the passage.

The verb here translated *went down*, when followed by the preposition used in this passage, includes almost uniformly, in the New Testament, the idea of entrance *into* the place mentioned; *e. g.* "Jesus went down *to* Capernaum." Is it not clearly implied he went *into* Capernaum? "Jacob went down *to* Egypt." Is it not meant, he went *into* Egypt, and not merely to the borders of it? So in common discourse, we say of a man, he has gone *to* New York—meaning he has gone *into* the city to buy goods.

The above passages very clearly show, how the language of Christ respecting baptism was understood, and strongly support the sentiment that *immersion only* was to be regarded as Christian baptism.

III. VARIOUS ALLUSIONS TO THE ORDINANCE IN THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE FIGURATIVE APPLICATIONS OF THE WORD, BAPTISM, confirm the justness of the position assumed.

The first passage I notice, is 1 Cor. 10: 2. "And were all *baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" The language is here figurative, and is intended to represent the Israelites, not as being *literally baptized*, but as submitting themselves to the special authority and guidance of Moses, as Christians, when baptized, submit themselves avowedly to Christ. By baptism, Christians avow their confidence in Christ, their choice of him, and their subjection to him, in all the offices which he sustains. Now, as Chris-

tians, in making their profession of allegiance to Christ, are surrounded with water, so the Israelites, when signally showing their allegiance to Moses, by passing through the Red Sea, were surrounded with water. The language is figurative, and can be explained only on the principle, that baptism was performed by immersion. Archbishop Newcome remarks, "They were figuratively and typically baptized; they were led to acknowledge the divine mission of Moses, through these miracles expressive of *baptism.*" Dr. Bloomfield adds, "The material of the cloud and sea, being nothing but water, was well adapted to express this typical representation of baptism." And Prof. Stuart admits, that it has a reference to "*surrounding.*" Well may this admission be made, the sea being on each side, and the cloud above them. Thus the cloud hung over their heads, as the water is over those that are immersed; and the sea encircled them on every side, as the water is around those who are baptized.

In 1 Pet. 3: 20, 21, we read, **** "When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The *like figure* whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us * * * * by the resurrection of Christ." Bloomfield gives the sense of the latter part of the passage thus: "The antitype to which thing, (namely, what corresponds to, and was figured

by, the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark,) doth now save *us* [*place us in a state of salvation*] through the resurrection of Christ, as the ark did *them*. I mean *baptism*." Here the situation of Noah and his family, shut up in the ark, floating on the waters of the great deep, and drenched by the mighty torrents which fell when the windows of heaven were opened, is mentioned by the apostle as an emblem of baptism. This allusion cannot be satisfactorily explained, unless the reference in the passage is to *immersion*.

Another figurative application of the term is found in the words of our Saviour, Luke 12: 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." The sense is, "I am about to be *overwhelmed* with sufferings, and I am greatly distressed with the prospect of them."*

So in Mark 10: 38, 39. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I must drink, and to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" The sense is the same as in the last passage; "Can ye indeed take upon you to undergo, patiently and submissively, sufferings like to mine—sufferings of an overwhelming and dreadful nature?"* The intense and overwhelming sufferings endured by the Saviour in Gethsemane, and on the cross, point us at once to the radical meaning of the word he employed. It is a word

* Prof Stuart.

strongly expressive of the greatness and abundance of the agonies he endured. We see the Redeemer "sunk in deep waters of affliction," "the waves and billows of anguish roll over him," and any idea short of a *complete immersion* is tame and insipid. Hence, Campbell translates, "I have an *immersion* to undergo, and how am I pained till it be accomplished." And Doddridge: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, i. e. I shall shortly, as it were, be *bathed* in blood, and *plunged* in the most overwhelming distress."

The last passage which I shall refer to under the present head, is found in Rom. 6: 3, 4. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." This passage has always been supposed to have an important bearing on the subject before us, and no wonder, when it is conceded by eminent Pedo-baptists themselves, that "the mass of unprejudiced readers" would perceive in it "an allusion to the practice of baptizing by immersion."* Believing it to be decisive in its character, I shall endeavor fully to illustrate its meaning and force.

The expressions, *baptized into Jesus Christ,*

*Barnes' note.

and *baptized into his death*, require explanation. The first, *baptized into Jesus Christ*, means to be baptized *into an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ*, with an implication of subjection, or discipleship to him. So to *be baptized into the death of Christ*, is to *be baptized into an acknowledgment of his death*, and *into an acknowledgment of the obligations resulting from that death.*"

"The design of the apostle in the first part of the chapter was, to meet an objection which might be raised against the statements of the preceding chapter. In that chapter he had largely shown that the grace of God vastly superabounds over the sins of men; and that the abounding of sin had proved an occasion of the superabounding of divine grace. If this be the case, some one might say, may we not still go on to sin, so that God's grace may be still more abundantly exhibited? The apostle's reply is very simple. It consists of two parts; 1. The internal character of Christians forbids such an objection; *they are dead to the influence of sin.* 2. Their external profession of Christianity opposes it; *by their very baptism, they have, as being dead to sin, symbolically been buried and raised ap again*, thus making an acknowledgment, that as Christ was buried and rose again, to a heavenly life, so they, as his followers, having by baptism, been buried and raised again, were bound to lead a new, a spiritual life.

It is contended, that the burying mentioned by the apostle, is not an external one, but an internal, a moral burying. This opinion seems effectually opposed by the circumstance, that the burying is performed *by baptism*, an external rite. The preposition which is here employed in the original, leads us to this view. It is [*διὰ τοῦ βαπτισματος*] BY baptism, that we are buried, not AT our baptism. It is not, that baptism merely furnished a suitable occasion for showing our being wholly disinclined to sin, so that when we professed Christianity, we might be said to be buried with respect to sin; but baptism is here represented as *the very thing*, *the very instrument*, or more properly *the very act*, BY which, or BY MEANS OF which, we were buried. The apostle seems to present two things, a death and a burial, which are clearly kept distinct; and the burial is an external thing, consisting in the fact, that we have been baptized into an acknowledgment of Christ's death. To continue in sin, then, would be inconsistent with our character, and our religious profession. The apostle says, that besides having become dead to sin, (viz., at our conversion,) we have also been buried by baptism into an acknowledgment of Christ's death. If the apostle had merely said, we are dead and buried in respect to sin, *omitting the words, by baptism*, his language would require a different interpretation. But the

apostle himself explains what he means *by burying*, when he adds, *by baptism.*"*

So Prof. Chase. "*Buried with him by baptism. Buried* with him—*how*? *By baptism*, the apostle answers. *In* or *by baptism*, then, Paul and the Christians whom he addresses were *buried.* To be crucified to the world, or dead to sin, is the *character* of the Christian; but to be buried with Christ by baptism, is the appointed emblematical *profession* of that character. The apostle does not teach, that believers are *crucified* with Christ, or are *dead* with him, or possess a *mortified* temper, *by baptism.* To have such a state of soul, to be dead in respect to sin, is one thing; and to be buried with Christ *by baptism*, is quite a different thing; for this is external, whereas the other is internal. The one is a sign; the other, the thing signified."†

To sustain the interpretation given above, the opinions of several distinguished Pedobaptist writers may be cited.

Rosenmuller, on the passage. "Immersion in the water of baptism, and coming forth out of it, was a symbol of a person's renouncing his former life, and, on the contrary, beginning a new one. The learned have rightly reminded us, that on account of this emblematical meaning of baptism, the *rite of immersion ought to have been retained in the Christian church.*"

* Ripley's Examination.
† Sermon before the Boston Association, 1823.

Martin Luther, after speaking of baptism as a symbol of death and resurrection, says: "On this account, I could wish, that such as are to be baptized, *should be completely immersed into water*, according to the meaning of the word, and the signification of the ordinance; AS ALSO WITHOUT DOUBT IT WAS INSTITUTED BY CHRIST."

Dr. Knapp, an eminent and pious German divine, whose works are recommended by Dr. Woods, speaking of the passage in question, thus expresses the apostle's idea: "*We are, like Christ, buried as dead persons, by baptism*, and should arise, like him, to a new life." He adds, "The image is taken here from baptized persons, as they were *immerged* (buried), and as they *emerged* (rose again)."

Dr. Bloomfield, one of the most profound living biblical scholars of Great Britain, and highly commended by Prof. Stuart as a learned and judicious critic, gives this paraphrase of the words, "buried with him by baptism:" "*We have been thus buried in the waters of baptism.*" He adds, "*There is a plain allusion to the ancient custom of baptism by immersion.*"

Coincident with these views is the unanimous testimony of learned men, and the universal belief of private Christians, in all countries and in every age, from the time of Paul to the present day. The notion of a "*moral* burying" is a modern invention, adopted by very few interpreters; an expe-

dient which would seem to be suggested by despair, with the hope of getting rid of the irresistible evidence furnished by this passage in favor of immersion. And here the reflections of another are truly important. This passage, in connection with the parallel text, Col. 2: 12, may be said to contain God's own explanation of his own ordinance. And here we may admire the divine wisdom and goodness. The mass of readers do not understand the original, and translators of the Bible, by *adopting*, not translating, the Greek words *baptize* and *baptism*, have hidden the meaning from the multitude. But the evidence from these passages *cannot be hid*—it is obvious to the most unlearned, and the words, "BURIED WITH CHRIST BY BAPTISM," may continue to make, as a Pedo-baptist writer says they have heretofore made, "more Baptists than any other passage in the Bible." The Spirit of God, through this commentary of the great Apostle, enables all men to judge for themselves, in this matter. While the learned are contending about the meaning of *βαπτίζω (baptizo)*, and the force of certain Greek prepositions, let those who are unacquainted with the original, turn to these allusions to the ordinance, and they will here see the definition which the Holy Ghost himself has given to the words in debate.

IV. Finally, we find a strong confirmation of the position originally taken, in the fact, that THE EARLY CHRISTIANS UNDERSTOOD THE

WORDS OF THE SAVIOUR TO REQUIRE IMMERSION, and THEY PRACTISED ACCORDINGLY.

I will here make a remark on the nature and value of the argument from church history. We by no means place our chief dependence on this. We regard THE BIBLE as our ONLY and SUFFICIENT *rule of faith and practice;* and, as before stated, to our own minds the directions of the word of God on this subject are perfectly clear. But *the practice of the Christians who immediately succeeded the apostles, shows how they understood the instructions of the apostles themselves,* who regulated their practice by the teachings of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Barnabas, the companion of Paul,* says in his Epistle, speaking of baptism, "*We descend into the water, and come out of it.*"

In the Pastor of Hermas, saluted by Paul,† we read, "*Men descend into the water, bound to death; but ascend out of it, sealed to life.*"

Justin Martyr. "*Those who believe are led to some place where there is water, and then bathe in the water.*"

In another place, he says, "We represent our Lord's sufferings and resurrection, *by baptism in a pool.*"

Tertullian. "We *are immersed in water*" —"*let down into the water and dipped*"—"*Peter immersed in the Tiber.*"

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* Acts 13 : 2. † Rom. 16: 14.

Dionysius Areopag. "*The total concealment in water* fitly represents Christ's death and burial."

Apostolic Constitutions (probably written in the fourth century). "Baptism relates to the death of Christ: *the water answers to the grave;* the *im*mersion represents our dying with him [Christ]; the emersion our rising with him."

Photius. "The three *immersions* and *emersions* of baptism signify death and resurrection."

Chrysostom. "We, as in a sepulchre, *immersing* our heads in water, the old man is buried and *sinking down,* the whole is concealed at once; then, as we emerge, the new man again rises.'

Jerome. "Three times we are *immerged*", &c.

Augustine. "Rightly are ye *immerged* three times, who have received baptism in the name of Christ."

In short, from the days of the Apostles downwards, for 1300 years, we have an unbroken chain of evidence showing, that baptism was performed by immersion, and *by immersion only.* To this there is only one apparent exception, viz: in *case of extreme sickness and danger of death.* In this case, immersion being impracticable, persons received a *substitute* for baptism, by pouring or sprinkling. Yet this was never regarded as regular baptism; but as baptism was then suppos-

ed to be *essential to salvation*, the sprinkling or pouring of water was permitted as a *substitute* for the gospel ordinance, and it was hoped, that, by *the indulgence of God*, it would be accepted, and the soul of the person poured upon or sprinkled would be saved. This practice, however, in the early ages of the church, was never defended on the ground of tradition or of apostolic usage. It was considered as wholly without authority from the Head of the church, and resorted to only from the exigency of the case, baptism being regarded as necessary to salvation.

These opinions are supported by the modern critics of Germany. The testimony of these illustrious men deserves the most serious attention, not only on account of their impartiality, as they have no interest in the controversy, but also from the fact, that they are of the very highest authority in language and antiquities.

Neander. "Baptism was originally *by immersion*. To this form various comparisons of the apostle Paul allude."

Tholuck, on Rom. 6: 4. "In order to understand the figurative use of baptism, we must bear in mind *the well known fact*, that the candidate in the primitive church *was immersed in water and raised out of it again*."

Winer. "In the apostolic age, *baptism was by immersion*."

Bretschneider. "The apostolic church baptized *only by immersion*."

Schleusner, Wahl, and Bretschneider, the three great New Testament lexicographers of Germany, *limit* baptism, as a sacred ordinance, to *immersion.*

Hahn. "*According to apostolical instruction and example*, baptism was performed *by immersing the whole body.*"

Prof. Lange. "Baptism in the apostolic age was a proper baptism—*the immersion of the whole body in water. Plunging under water* represents death, and *rising out of it*, the resurrection to a new life."

Fritsch. With infant baptism, still *another* change in the outward form of baptism was introduced, that of *sprinkling* with water, *instead of the former practice of immersion.*"

After these testimonies, you will be prepared to appreciate the concession of Prof. Stuart, who, quoting Augusti, says: "*It is a thing made out*," viz: the ancient practice of immersion. "I know," continues Prof. Stuart, "of no one usage which seems to be more clearly and certainly made out. I cannot see how it is possible for any candid man who examines this subject, to deny this."

It may be added, that the inhabitants of Greece, who certainly ought to understand their own language, from the first introduction of the gospel into that country to the present time, have uniformly baptized by immersion. Indeed, all the Christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one third part of Europe, still retain the rite as observed by the apostles

and early Christians. Nay more, the whole Christian world, for the space of *thirteen hundred* years, practised immersion, as the only real baptism. Never, by any Christians, in any age, was sprinkling or pouring allowed, in ordinary cases, until the meeting of the council of Ravenna, assembled by the Pope in 1311. These substitutions for the gospel ordinance were not admitted into England, till the middle of the seventeenth century.

If we would know how sprinkling was introduced, we are informed by the celebrated Dr. Wall (a Pedo-baptist), in his History of Infant Baptism. He says, "France seems to have been the first country in the world where baptism by affusion was used ordinarily to persons in health, and in the public way of administering it. In the church of England, it being allowed to weak children (in the reign of Queen Elizabeth), to be baptized by affusion, many fond ladies and gentlewomen first, and afterwards by degrees the common people, would obtain the favor of the priest, to have their children pass for weak children, too tender to endure dipping in the water. As for sprinkling, properly called, it *seems it was, at* 1645, *just then beginning*, and *used by very few*. They (the Westminster Assembly of divines) reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember, that fonts to baptize in had been always used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of Popery,

and ever since churches were built; but that sprinkling was really introduced, (in France first, and then in other Popish countries,) in times of Popery: and that, accordingly, *all those countries in which the usurped power of the Pope is, or has been formerly, owned, have left off dipping children in the font;* but that *all other countries in the world which had never regarded his authority, do still use it.*"

Thus we see, that sprinkling was originally introduced in France in 1311, by the Catholics, under the direction of a Popish council; yet immersion was retained in England for more than 300 years longer; till, in the progress of the Reformation there, the protestants, supposing the fonts in the churches and the practice of immersion *to be usages* of Popery, decided that "dipping of the person in water is not necessary."

I have now finished the view proposed to be taken, for the purpose of establishing the position, that IMMERSION IS ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. It has been shown, that the word employed by the Saviour in the commission, signifies, in its usual and proper sense, *only* to *immerse*, *dip*, or *plunge;* it appears from the places selected for the administration of the ordinance and from attending circumstances, that immersion was always practised by those who baptized under the direction of Christ; it is also apparent, from the figurative uses of the word baptism, and from various allusions by the writers of the New Testament, that

they considered immersion as *belonging to the nature of baptism;* and finally, the correctness of this view is most strikingly confirmed by the fact, that *the entire church* of Christ, *during a period of* 1300 *years, did practise immersion.* Are we, then, at liberty to substitute any thing else for the rite enjoined on us by the Lord Jesus?

But it is said, this view of the subject is incomplete; there are certain places in the Scriptures in which some form of the word baptize is mentioned, and others where the ordinance is named, which make it *very improbable*, that an immersion was either positively enjoined or invariably practised. A notice of these may be introduced by a single remark. Remembering the evidence which has been adduced to show that the word in question *must* mean *immersion, we are not permitted to assign to it any other meaning, unless in a given case immersion be impossible.* "When a thing is proved by sufficient evidence, no objection from difficulties can be admitted as decisive, except they involve an impossibility." Those then, who would render the term in debate, *washing* or *pouring*, or *sprinkling*, must prove, not only that the idea of immersion is *improbable*, but that it is manifestly IMPOSSIBLE. But this *cannot* be shown respecting a single instance in which the word occurs. The passages generally brought forward as unfavorable to the idea of immersion, arethe following:

Heb. 9 : 10. "Only in meats and drinks and divers washings."

That the word here translated "washings," should have been rendered *immersions*, is evident from the conclusions established under the first head of the former part of this discourse. Immersions were frequent among the Jews, in accordance with the Mosaic ritual. *If* the word in the original refer to various purifications of *things* only, then, by a well-known rhetorical figure, *taking a part for the whole*, immersions may be used for the several kinds of ablutions required by the law. Thus the primary meaning is clearly NOT IMPOSSIBLE, in this case. Prof. Robinson translates the word "washings," but refers to Lev. 11: 32, where various things were to be cleansed by being "PUT INTO WATER." This shows that the learned professor supposed *immersions* to be meant by the apostle. Others explain the term *divers* baptisms, as being "of *men* and of *things*." If this be the sense, no one will object to the idea of immersion.

Mark 7: 4. "The washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and *tables*" (couches).

It is supposed to be altogether unlikely, that the couches (for so the word rendered "tables" should be translated), on which they reclined at meals, should be immersed. But Prof. Robinson gives his views of the mode of washing, by quoting, as before, Lev. 11: 32, —showing that he understands all these arti-

cles were "*put into water.*" Things which had been defiled by the touch of a dead body, were required by the Levitical law to be cleansed "by being put into water;" and how easily might the superstitious Jews extend the practice to things not included in the requisition. The rules in force among the Jews are precise in requiring such articles as the above, to be cleansed by being covered in water; and the regulations are exceedingly strict with respect to this washing, *so that should there be any thing adhering to these articles, such as pitch, which might prevent the water from touching the wood in a particular spot, the washing would not be duly performed.* The same Jewish authority requires even beds to be cleansed by immersion, when they had become defiled. It is *not* then even "improbable" that "the couches" were immersed.

Mark 7: 3, 4. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not." The latter of the two words rendered "wash" is in the original from *βαπτίζω (baptizo)*—the former is not.

It is asked, does not the word here mean *wash* ? I answer, is it not *possible* that it *may* mean *immerse*? If so, this is all I am bound to prove. Let us examine the passage. "Here are two instances of washing (so called); the first, a matter of constant occurrence; thesecond, an observance performed after

returning from the market. Did these two washings differ from one another in any respect? It is evident that they did. For first, one was a washing which commonly occurred before a meal, without regard to the employment which had preceded it; so that even if a person had remained at home, still, before taking his meal, he would wash his hands. The other was a ceremony, performed after having been exposed to the various occasions of defilement, which would be connected with his attendance at market. Such was the variety of persons and things with which he might come in contact, that a more formal and thorough ablution would naturally be performed. In examining the whole passage, the attentive reader will perceive an advance in the thought. If, ordinarily, the hands were washed before eating, the reader is prepared to hear, that after returning from a mixed crowd of people, something different from, or additional to, this washing, was performed.

"In the second place, two different Greek words are employed to express the washing in the two different cases. The former is the word usually employed when only a washing of a part of the body, as the hands, face, or feet, is performed; the latter is used to denote the washing of the whole body by immersion.*

* Robinson's Lex. *βαπτίζω*, 1; defin. 2: remark. Comp. *Νίπτω*.

The passage shouldbe thus translated: 'For the Pharisees and all the Jews except they *wash* their hands oft, eat not; And when they come from the market, except they BATHE themselves, they eat not.' This was the opinion of Vatablus, a distinguished Professor of Hebrew at Paris. He says, on this passage, 'They cleansed themselves more carefully from defilement contracted at the market, to wit, by not only washing their hands, but even by immersing their body.' For these numerous immersions, the Jews had the most convenient arrangements, and their mode of dress would render the practice less burdensome than it would be with us." *

Luke 11: 38. "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner."

After what has been said above, this passage will present no difficulty. By the preceding part of the chapter it appears, that our Lord and his host had been exposed to a great mixture of company, and therefore needed in the judgment of the Pharisee, the more formal and thorough sort of washing. Bruce, the celebrated traveller, informs, that in Abyssinia, the sect called Kemmont, "wash themselves *from head to foot*, after coming from the market, or any public place, where they may have touched any one, of a different sect from their own, deeming all such unclean."

* Ripley.

Is it strange, then, to find the superstitious and self-righteous Pharisees immersing their couches for purification, or themselves after mingling in a crowd at the market or elsewhere?

Acts 10: 47. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?"

It is asked, may not this mean, can any man *forbid water to be brought in?* &c. *I reply, the import of the question* is simply this: *can any one forbid the baptism of these persons,* "who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" The word "baptized," then, must in this place have its usual sense, *immersed?*

Acts 16: 33, the case of the jailor. Prof. Stuart allows the "possibility" of there having been a bath" in the jail, in which the keeper's family were immersed. This "possibility" is all that need be asked. But this narrative not only does not present any objection to the idea of immersion; it furnishes positive evidence in its favor. The following appears to have been the order of events. Paul and Silas were thrust into the inner prison; an earthquake occurred; the jailor sprang in and fell down before Paul and Silas; he brought them out [of the prison]; they speak to him and *to all that were in his house;* he then washed their stripes; baptism was next performed; and after baptism, the company *returned to the house* (v. 34.) After instruction, then, had been given *in the house*, baptism was performed; and after baptism, *the*

company returned to the house. Did they not leave the house, in order that baptism might be administered? And why did the administration of baptism require them to leave the house, if it were not *that they might go to a bath or other place convenient for immersion?*

Acts 22: 16. * * * * 'arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.'

Is not baptism here called, *the washing away of sin?* And may not *baptize* then, mean *wash?* I answer, not at all. The address of Ananias to Paul was, Arise and *be immersed. Immersion* in *pure water* would have the *effect* of *washing.* So that here we are not at liberty to depart from the ordinary meaning of the word.

Acts 2. Great stress is laid on the baptism of the 3000, as offering an insuperable objection to the idea of immersion. But, be it remembered, *the burden of proof* lies on those who object to immersion. Can they *prove*, that immersion could not *possibly* be practised in this case? Hear the language of Prof. Stuart: "It is true, we do not know that baptism was performed by the apostles only, nor that all the 3000 were baptized before the going down of the sun. The work may have extended into the evening; and so, many being engaged in it, and more time being given, there was a possibility that the work should be performed, although immersion was practised."

Furthermore, let it be observed, it is no-

where asserted in the Scriptures, that *three thousand* were either *converted* or *baptized* on this day (the day of Pentecost). We are not informed whether *fifty*, or *five hundred*, or *more* were *baptized* on this occasion. We are simply told in reference to those who were then "pricked in their hearts," who gladly received the apostle's word," that *they* were baptized. "And,"—we are further informed, —"the same day there were *added*"—*not were baptized*—"about three thousand souls."— The Scriptures also warrant us in saying, that the apostles and the one hundred and twenty disciples, mentioned in the preceding chapter, were all present; and as many others in Jerusalem, and in that region, as could conveniently be at the feast of Pentecost."*

But there are FACTS on record in the history of the church, which remove every difficulty in the way of the immersion of the entire three thousand.

On the great Sabbath of the Easter festival, the 16th day of April, A. D. 404, Chrysostom, with the assistance of the clergy of his own church, baptized by immersion 3000 persons. Yes, one man assisted only by his presbyters, in one day and in one place, immersed 3000 persons; and that too, notwithstanding the Christians were twice attacked by furious soldiers, the enemies of Chrysostom.

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* Fuller on Communion: note, p. 71. Bloomfield says, "We need not suppose *all* [of the 3000] were baptized."

So in 496, Remigius, bishop of Rheims, baptized in the same day, by immersion, Clovis king of France, and *three thousand* of his subjects.

I will only remark, in relation to the above historical facts, that the baptisms referred to were administered on *Easter-day* to commemorate the resurrection of Christ; and it was common to reserve all the baptisms of the year for that day. Hence, the number of candidates who came forward at the same time.*

In view of the above examination of alleged improbabilities, I ask again, how can we feel ourselves at liberty to depart from the observance of the rite of baptism, as prescribed by the great Head of the church?

But there are objections to immersion, which are supposed by the advocates of sprinkling to merit attention.

1. "Christ intended his people should be free from inconvenient and burdensome rites; but immersion would often be inconvenient, and sometimes impracticable."

True, the almost innumerable rites and ceremonies of the ancient dispensation, with the time and trouble, the expense and toil demanded by them, are abolished. The external rites of Christianity are *two only*, baptism and the Lord's supper. These two, so simple, so instructive and impressive, are adapted to man wherever the triumphs of the cross shall be witnessed. Since, then, the

* Christian Review, vol. III. pp. 91, 92.

burdensome observances of the Mosaic economy are done away, and the founder of the gospel system has instituted only these two rites, though he has made immersion essential to baptism, shall we charge him with imposing upon his people a yoke like that which rested upon the children of Israel, too grievous to be borne?

As to the "inconveniences" attending the scriptural mode of baptism, those who practise this mode smile at the mention of them, knowing they exist only in the *imagination* of those, who have never tested the value of their objection by experiment.

In regard to the allegation, that immersion must ever be in some countries, and, in certain circumstances, in all countries, "impracticable," a moment's reflection will satisfy a candid mind, that little importance should be attached to it. *As a matter of fact*, immersion is practised, at this day, in some of the hot countries of Asia and Africa, in the frozen regions of Russia, and amid the perpetual snows of Siberia. And whenever, in any case, the administration of the ordinance would endanger life or health, it must be postponed, or altogether omitted. The deprivation of the privilege must be referred to *the providence of God*, and a spiritual mind will devoutly submit itself to that providence. God will accept "*a willing mind*," in the absence of physical ability, or of opportunity, to observe his ordinance. And the hardship is no greater in this instance, than in numer-

ous cases, where Christians are detained for years from the public worship of the sanctuary; or where they are prevented by the loss of sight from obeying the command, to "search the scriptures."

"But," it is asked, "should a person on the bed of death, give evidence of conversion, and desire to be received into the company of believers, before his departure, what could be done, excessive debility forbidding his immersion?" To this I reply, first, that not one among millions *is* converted in so weak a state, that an immersion could not be performed, in a bath, at his bedside; and, secondly, this case is met by the preceding remarks. The individual would suffer this loss in common with the loss of the privilege of Christian fellowship, and of opportunities to labor for the conversion of sinners, which he would have enjoyed, if he had turned from his sins and connected himself with the people of God, while in health. Humbled under the consciousness of guilt incurred by so long a course of sin, so late repented of, he will rejoice in the goodness of God which prepares him, though deprived of a connection with the church militant, for glory, honor, and immortality, with the church triumphant.

2. It is urged, that "the practice of the Baptists with respect to the Lord's supper, is inconsistent with their strict adherence to the primitive mode of baptism." It is said, they do not observe the requisitions of Christ with regard to "the time," or "the place," or "the

posture," of celebrating the ordinance of the supper—nor do they use the same kind of "bread," or of "wine."

I answer, the command of our Lord, "THIS DO YE in remembrance of me," had no reference whatever to the *circumstances* of celebrating the supper; it referred to *the eating of bread* and *the drinking of wine* in commemoration of his death, without any allusion to "time," "place," or "manner." So in relation to baptism; Christ commands his followers to be *baptized* [*immersed*], without reference to time, place, or manner. In each case, *we are bound to do just what he commanded.* In the Lord's supper, we are commanded *to partake of bread and wine*, in grateful remembrance of Christ; in baptism, we are commanded to perform THE ACT REPRESENTED by the word *baptize.*

The objection is founded on this error; it assumes that *immersion* is only a *circumstance* of baptism, while it has been already shown, *it is not a circumstance attending it, but belongs to the nature of baptism itself.*

3. "Immersion is unfavorable to collected, serious thought in the person who submits to it; and makes on the spectators an impression adverse to religion."

In respect of the first part of the objection, the multitudes who have been "*buried with Christ by baptism*," will testify to the serene composure, and the tender solemnity of their feelings. Numbers of timid and delicate

females, with placid brow and unwavering step, have gone "down into the water," in happy obedience to the Saviour they love. The ordinance, so significant, so full of rich and precious instruction, has a sustaining, elevating power, which makes its subjects superior to the infirmities which might, in other circumstances, disarm and overpower them.

With reference to the "impression" alluded to in the latter part of the objection, it deserves to be recollected, that on all subjects our impressions, whether right or wrong, are very liable to take their color from our *early associations*. In the case before us, facts demonstrate, that in numerous instances all the impressions connected with the scene are of the most solemn and sacred character. The venerated Andrew Fuller states, in his own account of his life, that the impressions he received on first seeing a person baptized by immersion, were the means, under God, of his conversion. Thousands of others, also, have been led, by the same means, to embrace the Saviour, who was thus set forth before their eyes, as "*buried and risen again*" for their redemption.

Some have even gone so far, as to speak of the administration of the ordinance by immersion, as "indecent." It may be well for such to reflect, that *if there had been no departure* from the baptism confessedly practised, as a general thing, by the apostles and primitive Christians, such a sentiment as this could never have found place in the bosom of

any follower of Christ. Let them also remember, that in urging this sentiment, they *may* stigmatize an ordinance of the Holy Saviour with indecency.

4. "There is no express command in the New Testament limiting us to immersion, and if Christ intended his people should confine themselves to this mode of administration, why did he not so plainly make known his will that there could be no mistake?"

This objection can have no force except with those who dissent from the conclusions which have been established in this discourse, respecting the meaning of *baptize*. If the meaning of language can be ascertained; if Christ did not intend to mislead us by using words out of their proper signification, then it is certain, that when the Saviour said, "Go teach, *baptizing*," &c., he *commanded* his ministers to practise *immersion*. The command is contained in the word BAPTIZE, and we are no more at liberty to require a clearer injunction, than the jailor would have been, when he was directed to "*believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ." The direction of the commission to *immerse*, is as plain as the direction "to *teach*," (make disciples or Christians;) or as the direct on which follows, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded."—To say that *baptize* may mean *to apply water in any manner* to the person, is as destitute of support, as for one to affirm, that the word "*eat*," in the following sentence, may

mean to *destroy* in any manner. "Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, *eat;* this is my body." Suppose a sect of religionists should arise, holding that we are not required to "*eat*" the bread in the sacred supper, but may *destroy* it in any other manner, which may seem to be more convenient or agreeable. A member of this sect might argue thus: It is admitted, that the ordinary and proper sense of "to eat" is "to chew and swallow as food;" but it also means "to corrode; to wear away; to separate parts of a thing gradually; to consume; *to destroy.*" The idea of *destroying* seems to lie at the foundation of all these definitions. Why may we not then suppose Christ did not intend to *confine* us to taking into the mouth and swallowing the consecrated element, but has left us at liberty to take it and DESTROY *it in any manner?* The bread is often unpalatable, and it is very difficult, perhaps dangerous, for some, through their infirmities, "to chew and swallow" it as food. Would the Saviour impose such a "burden" on the aged and the sick, as to *limit* them to this mode of *taking bread?* May we not crumble it in the hand, or rub it into minute particles on the floor; and, seriously watching the progress of *destruction,* may we not *so* be as truly reminded of the *broken body* of the Lord Jesus, as if we were "to *chew and swallow*" it, according to the primary and proper meaning of the word "*eat*"? To a

pious mind, this seems almost like irreverent trifling, but it is *by precisely similar reasoning* that it is attempted to evade the force of the argument, drawn from the acknowledged sense of the word *baptize*. And why does our "reverence" receive no shock, when the reasoning is applied to the ordinance of baptism? We must look to the power of long-cherished prejudices for a reply. The sum of the matter is this: In instituting the Lord's supper, the command of the Saviour is, "Take, *eat*;" in instituting baptism, he says, *immerse*. The word employed by Christ is as intelligible, specific, and definite, in the latter case as in the former; and if Christ has made it ESSENTIAL to "EAT" bread, in the ordinance of the supper, he has also made it ESSENTIAL to IMMERSE the person, in the ordinance of baptism.

In replying to the above objections, the design has been to meet the main difficulties which are supposed to be connected with immersion. I leave this branch of the subject with three or four additional remarks.

1. The objections just considered are all founded on a false and dangerous principle, viz: that we may determine what *is*, or what is *not*, a Christian ordinance, *by our views* of what is fit and proper, what is safe and convenient, expedient and useful. This is an error fraught with ruinous consequences. It is on this principle that the Roman Catholic justifies the unscriptural, foolish, and perni-

cious opinions and observances which are sanctioned by his church. In endeavoring to ascertain what is an ordinance of Christ, *we must consult the Scriptures;* TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY must we resort, and there must we obtain a verdict, from which there shall be no appeal.

2. It is a canon laid down by a distinguished teacher in theology, that "*A doctrine proved by sufficient evidence, is not to be rejected on any account whatever.*"* This rule will apply to the case in hand. Has not the position, that *immersion is essential to baptism*, been proved by *sufficient* evidence? If so, then we must not reject this truth, even if there were objections to it, which might seem to present to us insurmountable difficulties. But *no* such difficulties are connected with this subject.

3. Had the translators of our version possessed the light which the labors of eminent philologists during the last fifty years have thrown over this subject, they would have found themselves obliged, in conscience, to translate the word *βαπτίζω immerse*, in all cases; and they would not have consented to *adopt* it, instead of translating it, thus concealing the mind of the Spirit. Nay more, had not King James, under the advice of the bishops, *expressly ordered* the translators not to translate the words relating to baptism, I believe it *morally certain*, that that learned and

* Manuscript Lectures of Rev. Dr. Woods, on the "Incomprehensibility of Revelation."

pious assembly, acting even under the inferior light which they enjoyed, would have rendered the word, in every instance, in accordance with the views maintained in this discourse.

4. If the word rendered *baptize* does not specifically and necessarily convey the idea of *immersion*, then the Greek language, the most copious of all languages, *has no word for communicating that idea*—an idea with which the Greeks were familiar, and which they had occasion often to express. But if this word *does* express that idea, and there is no word in the Greek language which *more clearly* expresses it, then the language of the commission, *has, in the plainest terms, made immersion essential to baptism.*

Again; Christ either *intended* to *confine* his people to immersion, or *he did not.* If he *did* intend to confine them to immersion, the very word is used which an intelligent Greek would have used for the same purpose; if he did *not* intend to confine his people to immersion, then the use of such a word by his inspired apostles, is calculated to deceive and mislead his people.

5. In conclusion, I desire to record my deliberate and most serious conviction, that could all our prepossessions and prejudices be laid aside, we should never, for one moment, doubt, that immersion is prescribed by Christ as essential to the nature of gospel baptism. We should find an undeniable ex-

position of our duty in the practice of the apostles, and in allusions to the ordinance; and no question would ever be started respecting the will of the King of saints, or the obligations of his subjects.

The Lord hasten the day, when all his children shall submit their opinions to the decisions of his WORD, and subject their practice to the dictation of his COMMANDMENTS.

BAPTISM.

ITS SUBJECTS.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.—Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

Having considered *what is baptism*, I am now to inquire, *to whom* is this ordinance to be administered?

It may be regarded as certain, that a simple-minded reader of the New Testament, uninfluenced by previous instruction, or by any early associations, would never suspect, that any other persons than *those who believed* are to be baptized. In accordance with this sentiment, are the concessions of the advocates of the baptism of infants, many of whom admit, with Dr. Woods, that "*We have no express precept, or example, for infant baptism, in all our holy writings.*" "*Com-*

mands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament, relative to it" (infant baptism), says Prof. Stuart, "*I do not find.*" Martin Luther says, "*It cannot be proved by the Sacred Scriptures, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles.*" Neander says, "*That* CHRIST *did not establish infant baptism, is certain.*" Rosenmueller, Tholuck, Winer, De Wette, and others, while they assert that the primitive baptism was immersion, declare, with equal decisiveness, that infant baptism was unknown in the age of the Apostles.

Such being the state of the case, *the burden of proof* rests on those who maintain that infant baptism ought to be practised. As the practice is now extensively adopted, a claim might indeed be set up in its favor, as "an existing institution;" but any presumption which might be urged in its behalf, on this ground, is *rebutted* by the stronger presumption, that had Christ intended so important an ordinance, as the rite initiating its recipients into the Christian Church, should be extended to infants, he would have left, in the inspired writings, some distinct intimation at least of his will. But not one such can be found. Those, therefore, who contend, that all Christian parents should apply this ordinance to their infant children, *must prove* it to be a duty binding on the churches. Those who reject infant baptism, are not called on to state one objection against it: they may

act only on the defensive, while their brethren are bound to advance good reasons for supposing the practice to be obligatory. Accordingly, Pedo-baptist writers usually proceed at once by argument to defend and support the practice. The arguments generally produced, I shall now examine.

1. "*The New Testament does not forbid the baptism of infants.*"

Nor does it *forbid* the admission of infants to the Lord's supper, nor the invocation of saints, nor prayers for the dead, nor the use of holy water. But does this silence prove, that these superstitions are lawful, and should be observed ?

2. "*The want of an express divine precept requiring infant baptism, affords no valid objection against it.*"

I was myself once satisfied to adopt this sentiment, but a more careful examination has convinced me of my error. Why ought we not to be guided by the New Testament on the question, to whom is Christian baptism to be administered, as well as on the question, to whom is the Lord's supper to be administered ? And if infant *baptism* ought to be practised, although there is no divine precept in the word of God respecting it, why may not infant *communion* be binding on the churches ? Why is not the *Bible* a sufficient directory on this subject ? Is a man who has hitherto been ignorant of Christianity, and who has no views respecting it, but who has now received the

whole Bible, and is left to its guidance *alone*, is he not in a capacity fully to decide the question of duty as to the scriptural subjects of baptism ? And where, in the whole Bible, is the passage, or the combination of passages, that would suggest to such a man the duty of infant baptism ?

But it is said, we have no express divine precept respecting the observance of the Lord's day as the Christian Sabbath, or respecting "*female communion.*" But we have *the practice of the Apostles* to justify us for keeping the first day of the week as the Sabbath. Let us have as good a warrant for the baptism of infants, and we will be satisfied. And in relation to the communion of *females*, the command of Christ, addressed "originally to the *Apostles*," was not given to them *as* Apostles, nor *as men ;* but the practice was enjoined on them as *believers*, *disciples.* All persons, therefore, whether male or female, being believers, disciples, members of the church, are bound to celebrate the Lord's supper. It is also clear, from various passages of the New Testament, that *women* did partake of the supper. Can we find in the New Testament as satisfactory evidence in favor of infant baptism ? I will only add, that we do not reject the baptism of infants, merely because there is "no express divine precept," requiring it ; but, because there is neither command, nor example, nor fair infer-

ence in its favor, in a single passage in the word of God.

3. Authority for infant baptism is supposed to be derived "from the *Abrahamic covenant, baptism being regarded as a substitute for circumcision.*"

The covenant made with Abraham we find in Genesis xvii. 1—14:

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him. I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee; and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham: for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This *is* my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you. And thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you; and he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

This covenant may be considered as having a letter and a spirit. It contains three promises to Abraham: First: a numerous posterity, which was fulfilled in the *letter*, in the nation of Israel. It was fulfilled in the *spirit*, by the divine constitution that makes all *believers* the children of Abraham. Secondly: the next promise was, to be a God to him and his seed, which was fulfilled in the *letter*, by his protection of Israel in Egypt—his delivering them from bondage—his taking them into covenant at Sinai—and all his subsequent dealings with them, till they werecast off by their rejection of Christ. This promise was fulfilled in the *spirit* by God's being a God to all believers, and to them alone, in a higher sense than he was to Israel. The third promise was of the land of Canaan, fulfilled in the *letter* to Israel, and in the *spirit* fulfilled to the true Israel, in the possession of the heavenly inheritance. Now, be it remembered, it belongs to those who urge the practice of infant baptism, *to prove* from this covenant that all Christians are under obligations to adopt the practice. But can any Christian feel that this is the covenant which God has made with him? Christian parent, has God covenanted to give you *these* blessings? Though he may have covenanted to give you *some* of these blessings, together with many others, the question must be repeated, *Is this the very covenant which God has made with you?* If it is, then you are under obligations to perform the rite of circumcision on every man-

child in your house — and that, too, on the eighth day — neither before, nor after, that period.

But it is said, "*baptism has come in the place of circumcision.*" Where is the *proof* of this? You assert it, and you must prove it. If we are yet under "the covenant of circumcision," only baptism having taken the place of the ancient rite, why has not the Bible informed us of the fact? When some who had embraced the religion of Jesus (Acts xv.), insisted that the Christian converts should be circumcised, why did not the great council of the Apostles, and elders, who decided that circumcision was abolished, satisfy those who were jealous of the law, by reminding them, that the *baptism* of infants was to be practised as a *substitute* for circumcision? And when Paul wrote to the Galatians, in opposition to the Judaizing teachers, who held to circumcision, why do we find in his epistles not a single hint of the same fact? And if circumcision and baptism are *the same thing*, why was baptism administered to persons who had been previously circumcised? But I need not pursue these inquiries. The most eminent biblical scholars of the age agree with Prof. Stuart in the opinion, that "*the Abrahamic covenant furnishes no ground for infant baptism.*"* For my own part I zealously and laboriously endeavored, for months, to satisfy myself, that

* Manuscript Lectures on Galatians, iii.

the practice might be defended from this covenant, but was obliged to abandon the attempt in despair.

4. It is said, "*the Jewish church was the same with the Christian, and as children were connected with their parents by a religious rite, under the old dispensation, this relation may with propriety be marked by a religious rite, under the new dispensation.*"

In this statement are two errors. First, it is assumed that the two churches bear *such* a resemblance to each other, as to affect the point in debate; but this is the very thing to be proved. No matter how extensive may be the similarity between the ancient and the Christian dispensations, provided they are not similar *in respect of their members and ordinances.* There is no such sameness as this. The one, by its constitution, included carnal members; the other, by its constitution admits spiritual members only. The one was a *national establishment,* into which its members were introduced *by birth;* the other a spiritual organization, composed of those who have received the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, another error of the statement is, it supposes circumcision was designed to mark some "peculiar spiritual relation" between the parent and the child. But where is the proof of this? Not a particle of evidence to sustain such a position, can be brought from the word of God. On the contrary, circumcision was a mark of *national distinction,* intended to sep-

arate the people of Israel from surrounding nations, and to bind them together as one people. *Circumcision* of itself, *secured to the circumcised person no blessing ; it was enforced by the penalty of death ; it was not enjoined on all Jewish children, it was not enjoined on believers in other nations ; it could not, therefore, be a spiritual privilege to individuals.*

From this it is apparent, that there is no room for the allegation, that " if children are not baptized, they do not enjoy such privileges as Jewish children had." Even admitting that circumcision was designed to stand connected with peculiar blessings, still the child of the Christian believer has great advantages over the offspring of the Israelite. Unto him are committed the oracles of God ; like Timothy, he is made to know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make him wise unto salvation; from infancy, he is the subject of Christian sympathy and care ; from his birth, he is consecrated to God by supplication ; and on his expanding character are sweetly shed the influences of holy example, of religious education, and a peaceful home. This peculiarity in the condition of a believer's child, is recognized by the Apostle, when he bids Christian parents bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; recognized in all the promises of a divine blessing on parental fidelity ; recognized in the promiscuous application of the Spirit's power to the hearts of children thus trained up, whether they have

had the sign of the cross marked on their brow, or had water sprinkled upon their face, or have never approached a baptismal altar.

5. It is contended, that "*the Jews had been accustomed to baptize the children of proselytes to their faith*, and therefore the Apostles must have understood the direction, 'baptizing all nations,' to include children."

This argument depends for all its force, on the fact assumed, that *proselyte baptism* was practised among the Jews in the time of Christ. But this assertion is destitute of proof. Prof. Stuart, after an elaborate examination, has come to the conclusion, that "such baptism was practised *at, or not long after, the time when the second temple was destroyed*" — seventy years after Christ. This conclusion accords with the opinions of the great critics of Germany. The foundation, then, of the above argument being removed, the argument itself falls to the ground.

6. The friends of infant baptism place great reliance on the fact, that "*baptism was applied to infants in the early ages of the church.*"

The argument from the history of the church might be allowed to have great weight, if the practice under consideration, could be traced back to the Apostles; but this cannot be done. While we find Barnabas and Hermas, the friends of the apostle Paul, together with an uninterrupted succession of writers from their time downwards, frequently speaking of the immersion of believers, we find no mention

whatever of infant baptism till the time of Tertullian, two hundred years after Christ! I am aware, that distinguished Pedo-baptist writers have quoted Justin Martyr and Irenæus, Christian fathers who lived before Tertullian. But a careful examination of the passages referred to, will satisfy a candid inquirer that these fathers have been misunderstood.

Justin Martyr says, "Among those who were members of the Church, there were many of both sexes, some sixty and some seventy years old, *who were made disciples to Christ from their infancy.*" It is contended, that the last clause must refer to the baptism of infants. The Greek verb here employed, is the same as that rendered "*teach*" [*εμαθητευσαν*] in the commission. The simplest and most natural rendering of the passage is, *they were instructed from their childhood.*

Matthies, commenting on this passage says, "these words mean simply, that 'FROM THEIR CHILDHOOD THEY WERE INSTRUCTED IN RELIGION;' for, in another place, speaking of the order and manner of baptism, Justin Martyr says, that "*only those who believed* what they were *taught*, were baptized." From which it appears that, in Justin's view, baptism was to be given *subsequently* to faith."

Starck says: "The defenders of infant baptism attempt to prove it from Justin Martyr and Irenæus, *but neither of them says what is attributed to him.*"

Neander, Winer, Rheinard, and Mun-

scher, Hahn, Lange, and nearly all the German critics, are directly opposed to the Pedobaptist view of this passage.

The passage from Irenæus is as follows: "Christ came to save all through himself: all, I say, who through him are *regenerated* [renascuntur] to God, infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and the aged. Therefore, he passed through every age respectively, sanctifying infants by becoming an infant to them," &c. Every thing here turns on the meaning of the word translated *regenerated*. If it means *they were regenerated*, then it has nothing to do with our subject; if it means *they were baptized*, then it proves the existence of infant baptism in the time of Irenæus. An examination of Irenæus's manner of speaking will make it apparent, that the word in debate must have assigned to it the former meaning, *they were regenerated*. So, many eminent critics. Baumgarten Crusius. "The celebrated passage in Irenæus *is not to be applied to infant baptism*, for the phrase, *renascuntur*, &c. evidently means, the participation of all in his divine and holy nature, in which he became a substitute for all."

Winer. "Turtullian is the first that mentions infant baptism. *Irenæus does not mention it*, as has been supposed."

So Rossler, Munscher, Von Coln, &c.

Hence it appears, that Tertullian, about A. D. 200, is the *very first* writer who mentions infant baptism, and *he opposed it*,—"a

proof," says Neander, "*that it was not yet customary to regard this as an apostolic institution;* for had it been so, he would hardly have ventured to oppose it so warmly." Again, Neander says, "Tertullian declared against infant baptism, *which, at that time, was certainly not a generally prevailing practice*,—was not yet regarded as an apostolic institution. On the contrary, as the assertions of Tertullian render in the highest degree probable, *it had just begun to spread, and was therefore regarded by many as an innovation.*" It must be remembered, that Neander is the most eminent ecclesiastical historian of the present age. With him, in this view, the great body of living German critics are united.

Great stress is laid on the testimony of Origen (who flourished about the year of our Lord 220,) and of Augustine (about A. D. 400,) who testified to an apostolic tradition for infant baptism. In regard to the former, Neander says, "His words in that age cannot have much weight; for whatever was regarded as important, was alleged to be from the apostles. Besides, many walls of partition intervened between this age and that of the apostles, to intercept the view."

Augustine says, "Infant baptism *is believed* to be established, not without apostolical authority." Living at so remote an age from the apostles, being deeply engaged in the controversy as a violent party man, and catching at slight evidence with too great

avidity, we can scarcely regard him as a historical witness.

In the year of our Lord 253, Fidus, a country bishop, submitted to a council, sitting at Carthage, the question, "*Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old.*" It is said, "There was no doubt respecting the propriety of infant baptism,—that was admitted on all hands. And this shows the practice to be general in that age."

In reply, I remark, we have already seen Tertullian, who flourished only some fifty years before this, opposing infant baptism "*as an innovation.*" The practice, introduced about his time, had spread indeed, but so late as the time when the council assembled, it was still a question, whether it *was proper to baptize infants before the eighth day.* Now, to my mind, it is plain, that had infants been baptized from the days of the apostles down to the session of the council, *this question could never have been started.* The usage in the case would have been *settled* long before that day; and the fact, that such a point was *un*settled in the mind of a bishop, shows that infant baptism was not, even at that period, a *general* practice.

Before leaving the argument for infant baptism from ecclesiastical history, an argument on which the very greatest dependence is placed, one or two comments may be admissible. While the chain of evidence in favor of *immersion* is *unbroken*, from the very days of Paul and Barnabas downwards, *all the links*

which should connect the later practice of the church in regard to infants, with the time of the Apostles, ARE MISSING ! We hear not a syllable of the baptism of infants till two hundred years after Christ. It is admitted, however, that the practice was commenced near the close of the second century, and gradually gained ground in the third; and it may be asked, how could the change from adult to infant baptism be introduced ? In reply, it is enough to ask, how could episcopacy, and the use of sponsors, the sign of the cross on the forehead, the dressing in white, and a multitude of usages and ceremonies, be introduced, all " without a whisper of opposition ? " Especially, I ask, how could infant *communion* become universal in the church, without a single note of remonstrance ? There is *the same evidence* from antiquity, in favor of *this*, as in favor of infant *baptism* ; and if you adopt the one practice on the ground of the usage of the ancient church, you must also adopt the other. The truth unquestionably is, *infant baptism was introduced into the church contemporaneously with the notion, that baptism is essential to salvation.* When this idea prevailed, baptism of course must be administered to infants, or they were doomed to perdition. But I pass to another topic.

7. Household baptism. It is argued that " *the Apostles baptized certain households, and it is probable these households* contained infant children." " *Probably* " they contained infants ! But my brethren must make it *cer-*

tain—the burden of proof rests on them. They cannot use the "households" as an argument in their favor, till they PROVE, not only that they *might* contain, but that they actually *did* contain infants. This will scarcely be attempted, for the Holy Ghost has left on record facts concerning two of these cases, which demonstrate, *that they contained only those who believed.*

In the case of the jailor, it is said, "Paul and Silas spake unto him the word of the Lord, and *to all that were* in *his house.*" "And he rejoiced, *believing in God with all his house.*"

Dr. Macknight, a Pedo-baptist, remarks, "The house of the jailor, it seems, *were equally impressed with Paul's sermon, as the jailor himself was.*"

Calvin. ——"in which the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the whole family to a pious consent."

Bloomfield. "It is taken for granted, *his family became Christians as well as himself.*"

Concerning the household of Stephanas, Paul writes: "it is *the first fruits* of Achaia, and *they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*" On which Dr. Macknight remarks, "The family of Stephanas *seem all to have been adults when they were baptized,* as they are said to have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints."

With reference to the case of Lydia, it appears she was a stranger from Thyatira, residing in Philippi, nearly three hundred miles from home, for the purposes of trade. It is

not in evidence that she had a husband or children. Probably her household was composed of assistants in her business, who, following her example, believed and were baptized. For, we are informed, that when Paul and Silas left the city, they entered into the house of Lydia, and saw and comforted *the brethren.*

Thus we find in the New Testament, *baptized households* just so often as we find *believing households.* So now, in the church, Baptist ministers are frequently permitted to baptize whole families, on a profession of their faith; and within a recent period, the missionaries in Burmah speak of baptizing eight entire households of believers.

3. Infant baptism is enforced from "*the nature and fitness of things,*" and "because *it is agreeable to the feelings of parents.*"

The feelings which prompt pious parents to present their infant offspring for baptism, are often deserving of great respect. Indeed, they are frequently deemed sacred, and no profane eye should look upon them with unhallowed gaze. But when, influenced by these "*feelings,*" men would impose on the churches, as a divine institution, an uncommanded ceremony, and thus set aside an ordinance of Christ, it becomes us to examine the strength of the argument.

The principle on which the reasoning proceeds is this: *whatever observance is pleasant to the feelings of good men, ought to be regarded as an institution of God!* There are, doubtless,

pious men in the Roman Catholic church, and the unscriptural ceremonies of Popery "are agreeable to their feelings." Is this any reason for supposing these ceremonies binding on all the disciples of the Saviour! Prayer for the repose of departed spirits, supplications to the Virgin Mary and to the saints, and the worship of images, are pleasant to the "*feelings*" of those who offer them; but is this a sufficient proof that all the followers of Christ ought to adopt the views of the Catholics, in these matters? If the advocates of infant baptism have no better reason than this for their practice, I do not see how they can require others to conform to them. The fact is, parents usually think of the baptism of their children, as an act of *dedication* to God, and it is in *this* that their feelings are interested. They desire to *consecrate* them to the Saviour, *and they take it for granted*, that they may make the consecration "by baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Under the impulse of their affectionate "*feelings*," they forget to ask, whether their proposed course will be agreeable to the great Head of the church. This should not be. Men must not set up their "feelings" as the standard, and bring God's law to bend to them. We must first ascertain the will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, and then endeavor to bring our feelings cheerfully to accord with that will. Infant *dedication* is eminently proper, but let it be performed so as

not to violate a law of Christ's kingdom. Let the fond parent take the child of his affections into his closet, and there, in secret, solemnly consecrate it to the service of his Father who seeth in secret. Let his solemn vows of consecration be followed by appropriate efforts, and he may expect the blessing of the God of heaven upon his offspring.

But an argument in favor of infant baptism is founded upon "*the nature and fitness of things.*" This argument entirely overlooks the distinction between *positive institutions* and *moral duties.* These last, such as repentance, faith, justice, benevolence, praise, prayer, may be deduced "from the nature and fitness of things." Not so with positive institutions. These depend for their authority *on the will of the founder*, and unless that will has been clearly expressed, they cannot be binding. To attempt to establish the claims of a religious ceremony, by reasoning "from the nature of things," is essentially absurd and fearfully dangerous. It would be as easy to prove from the nature of Christian humility, that washing one another's feet is an ordinance of Christ's church; or from the nature of Christian fellowship, that greeting each other with a "holy kiss," or giving to each other, in due form, "the right hand of fellowship," is a divine ordinance, as to prove from the nature and fitness of things that infant baptism is an appointment of heaven. Not a ceremony was ever honored with a place in the Romish

ritual, for which some such reason could not be assigned. To endeavor then, by reasoning "from the nature and fitness of things," to fasten on the churches a ceremony, which is neither commanded of God, nor countenanced by scriptural example, is illogical, absurd, and fraught with the most pernicious consequences.

9. Although it is conceded that there are no commands or certain examples in the New Testament, in favor of infant baptism, yet it has been supposed *indirectly to find support from several passages of Scripture*, which I now notice.

Matt. 19: 13, 14. "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." It is said, the phrase, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven," means, *for to such the kingdom of heaven belongs: they have a right to its blessings.* In support of this rendering, Matt. 5: 3, is quoted: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, *for theirs is the* kingdom of heaven." But there is a marked difference between the two passages, in the Greek, as well as in our own version. Respecting the poor in spirit, it is said, *of them*, or *of these*, is the kingdom of heaven; *the kingdom of heaven is made up of these. These*, the poor in spirit, *these only*, are the subjects of the kingdom of

heaven. In relation to the children, it is said, of *such* is the kingdom of heaven; not, of *these*, but of *such as these*, of persons *like* these children. [See an account of the same transactions, Mark 10: 13—16, Luke 8: 15—17.] The English edition of the Polyglott Testament (New York, 1832) gives the true sense. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven:" that is, "*of persons resembling children in disposition;* having their innocence, simplicity, humility, teachableness."

So Barnes, in his note on the place: "The kingdom of heaven evidently means here, *the church*. Whosoever shall not be humble, unambitious, and docile, shall not be a true follower of Christ, or a member of his kingdom. *Of such as these*—that is, *of persons with such tempers as these*—is the church to be composed. He does not say, *of those infants*, but of such persons as *resemble* them, or were *like* them in temper, was the kingdom of heaven made up."

So Kuinoel, Rosenmueller, and Bloomfield.

Acts 2: 39. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

What "promise?" Certainly not any promise found in the covenant with Abraham, for the matters therein contained have nothing to do with the subject of which he is speaking; namely, the influences of the Holy Spirit. But he refers to the promise recorded Joel 2: 28,

which had already been adduced in the seventeenth verse—"To your *children.*" In Joel, to their "sons and daughters," who should be old enough to prophesy. The word "*children*" here denotes, *descendants, posterity,* and has no reference to children *as children.* [See Barnes and Bloomfield.]

1 Cor. 7 : 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

It is said, that the children being "HOLY," are to be considered "*as belonging to the Christian community—are to be treated as* CHRISTIAN *children.*" Admit that the children are to be reckoned, in some sense, with the Christian community, it does not follow that they are connected with it in *such* a sense as to require them to be *baptized* : admit, that they are to be treated as *Christian* children, the question arises, *how* are Christian children to be treated? We are not, by any means, *here* informed, that such children are to be considered proper subjects of Christian baptism. If they are to be so considered, let it be proved from other parts of the word of God, and then it will be conceded, that the children of parents, one of whom is an unbeliever, must be baptized.

A slight examination will show that the passage affords no support for the practice of infant baptism.

The Corinthians had inquired of Paul, whether the marriage connection between a Christian and an unbeliever ought to be dissolved. Paul answers in the *negative*. In the verse quoted, he gives a *reason* why diversity of religion should not authorize a separation, and in assigning this, he anticipates the objection, "Shall I not be *polluted* by such close union with a profane and polluted person?" To which the answer is, "No: the believing wife is not polluted by the unbelieving husband, but rather the unbelieving is *sanctified* (made ceremonially *clean*, or *holy*,) by the believing." For otherwise, (namely, if the unbelieving party be not thus *clean*,) your children would be considered impure and unclean. But you believe they are not unclean; therefore you may be satisfied that your connection is lawful and proper.

Or thus: As the man and wife are *one*, they are *ceremonially clean* (holy). So that they are not to be separated. If this were not so, your children would be unclean, (*ceremonially*, not *civilly*,) and the pious parent could lawfully have no intercourse with them, must not even *touch* them; but "*now*," since the unbelieving parent is thus affected by the believing, your children are clean, ceremonially pure, "holy," and the marriage bond must not be broken.

The whole case may be decided by a single consideration: the *holiness* here spoken of, is ascribed to the *unbelieving parent*, as well

as to the *children;* and if the children are so far affected by the piety of the believer as to be entitled to the ordinances of the church, *the believing parent is affected to the same extent, and must be entitled to the same privileges.*

Prof. Stuart remarks on this passage: "*It cannot mean*, that the children are made the proper subjects of baptism; for if this were the case, then the unbelieving husband or wife would be made so by the believing party. Further; such a sense would be inapposite to the course of the reasoning."*

Barnes, in the course of an exposition of the passage, agreeing in the main with the above, remarks: "*There is not one word about baptism here; not an allusion to it, nor does the argument, in the remotest degree, bear upon it.*"

Rom. 11. The argument from this chapter is the same as that already noticed under the *fourth* head of this discourse. I will here observe, there is not a word in the whole chapter, to show that the apostle had a single thought respecting *any* external rite or ordinance whatever. It may be inferred from his representations, that the Jewish and the Christian dispensations are similar, *so far as the spiritual and essential nature of religion* is concerned; nothing more than this can be logically deduced from the chapter. So Barnes, Stuart, and Bloomfield, who avail themselves of every passage which promises the slightest

* Manuscript Lectures.

support to Pedo-baptist views, have never thought of deriving proof from this chapter.

The arguments which are usually employed by the ablest writers in favor of infant baptism, have now been presented and examined. Do these arguments prove it to be an ordinance of the great Head of the church, appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and binding on all the churches? If proved, whence is the proof derived? From the passages of scripture just examined? They "do not hint at the subject." "From the nature and fitness of things?" This argument cannot be applied to *positive* institutions. They are obligatory only because they are *commanded;* but it is granted that infant baptism is *no where commanded* in the word of God. From its being "agreeable to the feelings of parents?" But this is a question of *fact*, not of *feeling;* of *duty*, not of *desire*. We must not by our "*feelings*" decide what *ought* to be God's word, but must submit our feelings to whatever *is* God's word. From "the baptism of households?" It is not proved there was a single infant in those households; and if there were many, the Holy Ghost has added circumstances which clearly show, that "the narrative speaks only of adults or intelligent agents."*

Is infant baptism proved "from church history?" But while, from the earliest period, the baptism of *believers* appears on every

* Neander.

page of history, her voice is dumb respecting *infant* baptism for *two hundred* years after Christ. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and all the writings of the fathers, down to Tertullian, there is not even an allusion to this subject. Nothing is said in the New Testament, nothing in the fathers, concerning children who had received "the seal of the covenant." Though often addressed, the children of believers are never reminded of the obligations which this covenant, made by their parents on their behalf, imposes. Parents also, although admonished to "train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," are never called on to "remember the covenant" in which they gave their children to God, at their baptism. In short, we have no hint at the baptism of infants, *till the ordinance was considered essential to salvation.*

Is the practice argued from "proselyte baptism?" It is *settled* by the decision of modern critics, that the baptism of proselytes was not known among the Jews, till after the destruction of the second temple, A. D. 70.

Is the duty enforced from "the Abrahamic covenant, and the substitution of circumcision?" But we have seen, that the covenant with Abraham is not the covenant with believers. The token of this covenant, as applicable to the Gentiles, was solemnly disavowed, at a convention of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Nor was a syllable utter-

ed respecting baptism, as a substitute for the disavowed token. Besides, if we say, circumcision was a *type* of baptism we violate a great principle of interpretation, viz. nothing in the New Testament is to be considered as *typified* by the Old, *unless clearly so regarded by the sacred writers themselves.* If we depart from this canon, we open the door to a deluge of allegorical absurdities. We must agree, then, with

Starck. "The connection of circumcision with infant baptism, *deserves no consideration,* since there were *physical* reasons for circumcision in infancy."

Augusti. "The parallel between circumcision and baptism *is altogether foreign to the New Testament.*"

Prof. Lange. "This comparison [of baptism with circumcision] is without foundation, because, *the only circumcision of the gospel dispensation is,* according to Paul, *the circumcision of the heart.*"

Rheinhard, Morus, and Doederlein say, "*infant baptism is not to be found in the Bible.*"

Gesenius, the celebrated Hebrew Lexicographer, being informed, that the Baptists of America practise immersion, and reject the baptism of infants, remarked: "*They do right—that is according to the Bible.*"

But to proceed. Is the obligation to baptize infant children, made out "from the identity of the church?" We have seen, that this identity is nothing to the purpose, so long

as the Christian dispensation differs from the Jewish, in its rites and its subjects. The resemblance in the case is *internal* and *spiritual*, not *external* and *ritual*.

Finally, is "the *silence* of the New Testament concerning infant baptism," a proof that Christians are bound to observe it as a divine institution? Can *silence* establish a *positive* institution, or a *blank* give us *specific* and *definite* instructions?

I repeat, do the foregoing arguments, separate or combined, PROVE infant baptism to be a divine ordinance, and binding on the followers of Christ? In the New Testament, *faith and baptism are always joined together;* not a whisper is heard concerning the application of the ordinance to infants, till six or eight generations of Christians, after Christ, have gone to the mansions of rest. If, therefore, this practice is to be regarded as a requisition of the Saviour, the labor of proving it to be such assuredly rests on those who would lay the obligation on the churches. As the proof is not made out from the arguments above noticed, I might here pause. I am not bound to advance a single consideration against infant baptism, or in favor of believers' baptism. This latter stands as the baptism, the *only* baptism recognized in the gospel, till proof, full and decisive proof, is adduced, showing that infant baptism is also enjoined. No man is at liberty to apply the sacred rite of baptism to any other subject than a believer, till he can show,

beyond all reasonable doubt, that such an application is required by the Founder of the Christian system. It is not enough that the practice in question be innocent, or even appears to be useful; it must be *required.*

But, although according to every rule of fair, logical reasoning, it cannot be demanded, yet I am willing, as a gratuity, to suggest some reasons for thinking THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS TO BE THE ONLY GOSPEL BAPTISM.

I. This is evident, in the first place, from THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

"The great characteristic which distinguishes the present economy from that which has vanished away, is its spirituality. The ecclesiastical constitution which commenced in the family of Abraham, and was fully organized by the ministry of Moses, was not only religious, but political. Church and state were then one, for the civil government was then a theocracy. It embraced all who were natives of Judea. To be a member of the Jewish church, and a subject of the civil government, was the same thing; for to the church God held a political relation. But to the Christian church God holds no political relation. Though the Son is King in Zion, and wields a mighty sceptre, yet he rules by a spiritual, not a civil, sway. If, then, the kingdom of Christ is strictly spiritual; if the subjects of it 'are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;' if they

are not to say within themselves, we have Abraham to our father, because God is able, of the very stones, to raise up children unto Abraham—then how incongruous is it with the nature of that kingdom to give one of its sealing rites to those who can furnish no evidence of a spiritual regeneration, and who are connected with the subjects of it only by ties of natural or civil relationship. What a confounding is this of the relations of nature and of grace, of the claims of the flesh and of the spirit, of the immunities of the church and of the world! But if true Christians 'are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;' if as many as have been baptized into Christ, '*have put on Christ;*' if, in his kingdom, 'there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female,' but all 'are one in him;' then, how fitting, how becoming it is, that all such, and only such, should show forth their 'peculiar relation to him,' by being baptized into his name."*

II. THE SIGNIFICANCY OF BAPTISM, AND THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER WHICH ITS RECEPTION LAYS ITS SUBJECTS, afford conclusive proof that it should be applied only to believers.

On examining the Acts of the Apostles, we find baptism every where regarded as *a public profession of faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those "who gladly received the word were baptized." So "Crispus" and many of the

* Christian Review.

Corinthians hearing, "believed and were baptized." Hence, baptism is considered the solemn initiatory rite of admission into the Christian church. As soon as a person was baptized, he was called a "saint," a "disciple," a "believer." So, by baptism, we sacredly bind ourselves to believe the doctrines of the Saviour, to obey his precepts, to lead pious, godly lives, after his example. Paul says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ:* that is, are Christians, and are therefore bound to confess him for your Lord and Master, to obey him, and to follow his example. Peter calls baptism, "*the answer of a good conscience towards God.*" The meaning of the word here rendered "answer," is, *engagement, pledge,* or *promise,* and so denotes *any solemn obligation which one assumes before God.* The idea of the Apostle is, By baptism we take upon ourselves the sacred obligation, in the presence of God, to maintain a good conscience, to be watchful against sin, and to strive after holiness. As the Israelites, being baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, submitted themselves to his authority and guidance, so baptism into the name of Christ is an *oath of allegiance to him, as a sovereign;* it is a "*devotement*" to him, an oath of entire consecration to him, a voluntary yielding up of the whole body and spirit a "living sacrifice" to his glory. It gives a beautiful and strong expression to the feelings of the Christian, who can say :

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love, so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

But nothing but the baptism of believers can meet the representations here given. Infants cannot profess their faith, or put on Christ, or acknowledge their obligations to maintain the answer of a good conscience, or practise the self-devotement, which is required of the baptized. And yet all these are exhibited in the New Testament as *essential to the nature of baptism.*

The New Testament also represents baptism to be emblematical of the death and resurrection of Christ. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his* DEATH?"—or did, by our baptism, acknowledge his death, as declared in the gospel? "Buried with him in baptism, wherein" (in which emblem) "also ye are risen with him, through faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead." Here the apostle associates our being quickened or rising to a holy life, with Christ's rising from the grave. And he reminds us of the source of all our hopes, ("having forgiven your trespasses,") by reminding us of the significant and solemn act by which we publicly devote ourselves to the Saviour, "being buried with him in baptism."

Baptism is also significant of the belief of the subject of it in *the resurrection of the body.* "Else what shall they do who are bap-

tized for the dead? If the dead rise not, why are they then baptized for the dead."* That is, If there shall be no resurrection, why do the followers of Christ, by their very baptism, profess their belief in the doctrine of the resurrection? And why is baptism so significant a sign of our dying, and rising again?

But what avails all this fulness of meaning, this richness and preciousness of instruction in the gospel ordinance, if it is to be thrown away upon unconscious infancy? But if *only those who believe* are proper recipients of the ordinance, then indeed can we perceive it to be instructive, impressive, and delightful.

III. We have seen from the spiritual nature of Christianity, and from the significancy and uses of the ordinance, that baptism is, in its nature, adapted to believers only. If any doubt yet remains, as to the duty of confining it to believers, all uncertainty will be removed by considering the bearing of THE APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION on this subject: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is the LAW under which the ministers of Christ are instructed to go forth, as the agents and representatives of the Lord Jesus, and, by their instrumentality,

* 1 Cor. 15 : 29.

convert men, receive them into the church by baptism, on a profession of their faith, and afterwards instruct them into the knowledge of Christ's commandments; this is the law, established by the King in Zion for the forming and organizing of churches. The words of a law should always be precise and readily understood. If the legislature order the raising of an army, *they describe the class of men, who shall be enrolled*, (say, able-bodied men from 18 to 45 years of age) *and the manner in which the enrolment shall be made.* So the law of Christ under consideration. There are three things which our Lord distinctly enjoins, namely: to make disciples or Christians, to introduce the disciples, (Mark 16: 16, called *believers*,) into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptized into all the duties of the Christian life. Can any thing be plainer, than that this law authorizes the baptism of believers only? But it is said, the directions of Christ here refer only to "those who are capable of believing," and the language "does not forbid" the baptism of infants. True, these directions command none but believers to be baptized, and we see good reason for this, in the considerations heretofore suggested, relative to the import and effects of baptism. But further, the terms of the commission, while they enjoin the baptism of believers, *do, most certainly, exclude the baptism of any but believers.* If I commission my agent to purchase for me a lot of Webster's *large* dic-

tionaries, does he not violate his instructions, if he also buys on my account a lot of the abridgments? But, he says, "you did not *forbid* the purchase of the abridgments." Did not *forbid* the purchase! I answer—It was not necessary for me to insert in your commission a prohibition against purchasing other books. Your instructions were definite, and when I directed you to buy the *large* books, you must have known you had no authority to buy *small* books; you have done it at your own risk.—You are about to engage in the cultivation of silk, and you send a commission to a friend, requesting him to purchase for you 5000 mulberry trees, *two years old.* In answering your order, he sends you 5000 of the age prescribed, and 5000 *more of only one year's growth.* You remonstrate. Your friend replies: "The words of the commission referred only to buying 5000, which were two years old —you did not direct me *not* to buy 5000 more, the growth of the present year." Nor was it necessary, you rejoin. When you received a commission to purchase mulberry trees *of a certain description*, you were as really prohibited to purchase any others, on my account, as if I had said, in so many words, buy 5000 mulberry trees two years old, and *do not* buy any others. You might as well have procured for me 5000 *hickory* trees, and urged that the words of your commission do not forbid it! In doing as you have done, you have not only acted without authority, but also against my

instructions, and you must abide the consequences. So the commission granted by our Lord, directs his ministers to baptize believers, and *them only. Mentioning none but believers, it virtually excludes all others.* To administer the ordinance to any others, is to act without the authority of Christ, and against his instructions. Yea, more: "Not only does this commission exclude infants from the baptism it enjoins; if there were even another commission requiring the baptism of infants, when these infants who have been baptized, according to this supposed second commission, come to believe the gospel, they must be baptized according to the commission now under consideration, without any regard to their baptism in infancy. The *commission commands all men to be baptized, on believing the gospel.* Had there been even a divinely appointed baptism for them in infancy, it cannot interfere with this baptism, nor excuse men from obedience to the command that enjoins believers to be baptized. *The command of Jesus to every believer to be baptized*, stands engraven in indelible characters in this commission. It cannot be effaced; and I call on all believers, on their allegiance to the Son of God, to submit to this ordinance of his kingdom."

"But," it will be said, "the reply to this is simple and satisfactory. Suppose the ordinance of *circumcision* had been to continue, and the command had run in these terms: 'Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations,

circumcising them, in the name of the Father,' &c. Had such language been used, we should have known, that children were to be the subjects of the rite, as well as their parents; the previously existing practice would have ascertained this.' This is specious, but by no means conclusive. Had such a commission been given *to circumcise*, it would have utterly excluded infants. Could a command to circumcise *believers*, include a command to circumcise unbelievers? Impossible. No matter what was the former practice with respect to circumcision. If the apostles are commanded to circumcise believers, they cannot, in virtue of that commission, circumcise any but believers.

"With reference to Mark 16: 16,—'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned'—it is said, '*if we infer that a person must actually believe*, else he cannot be baptized, we must also infer that he must actually believe, else he cannot be saved; hence, *infants* cannot be saved. Certainly, if there were no way of saving infants but by the gospel, this conclusion is inevitable. The gospel saves none but by faith. But the gospel has nothing to do with infants, nor have gospel ordinances any respect to them. The gospel has to do with those who hear it. It is good news; but to infants it is no news at all. They know nothing of it. The salvation of the gospel is as much confined to believers, as the baptism of

the gospel is. None shall ever be saved by the gospel who do not believe it. Consequently, by the gospel no infant can be saved. Infants are saved by the death of Christ, but not by the gospel, not by faith. They are to be regenerated, but not by the gospel; they must be sanctified for heaven, but not through the truth revealed to man. The position is therefore good; none can be saved by the gospel, but such as believe the gospel; none can be baptized with the baptism of the gospel, but such as believe the gospel. There is no exception in either case." *

If any thing more were necessary to satisfy us respecting the commission, we have it in the *formula* employed in administering the ordinance, "Baptizing them in (*into*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Barnes gives the meaning thus: "Baptizing them into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a solemn profession of the only true religion, and by a solemn devotion to the service of the sacred Trinity." But surely, none but believers can make this "solemn profession," and this "solemn devotion" of themselves to the Trinity. To pronounce these words over *infants*, is to use the sacred names of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, *without* meaning, or with *a* meaning which is wholly unauthorized by the commission of our Lord.

That none but believers are entitled to bap-

* Carson.

tism, is also evident from the concluding direction of the commission, "*Teaching* them," &c. The candidate is supposed to be old enough to be *taught* the other institutions of the gospel. Unconscious babes are of course excluded. This is agreeable to the views of many learned and pious men, who were not Baptists.

Grotius. "Christ properly requires teaching the first elements of Christianity as *preceding baptism;* which also was always used in the church previous to that ordinance."

Jerome, the most learned of all the Latin Fathers, says: "They *first teach* all nations; then *when* they are taught, they baptize them with water; for it cannot be, that the body should receive the sacrament of baptism, unless the soul has before received true faith."

Calvin. "Because Christ requires teaching before baptizing and will have believers only admitted to baptism, baptism does not seem to be rightly administered, except faith precede."

Baxter, speaking of the commission: "This is not like some occasional, historical mention of baptism; but it is the very commission of Christ to his apostles for preaching and baptizing; and purposely expresseth their several works in their several places and order. Their first task is, by teaching to make disciples, which by Mark are called believers. The second work is to baptize them. The third work is, to teach them all other things, which are afterwards to be learned from the

school of Christ. To contemn this order, is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here? I profess my conscience is fully satisfied, that there is one sort of faith, even saving, that must go before baptism."

It is unnecessary, by way of farther confirmation, to refer to the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament. In all cases, *we find only those who believe* permitted to receive the ordinance. So the description of those who composed the churches in the time of the apostles, shows that none but those who gave credible evidence of piety had received the rite of initiation into the church. They are said to be "not of the world"—to have "put on Christ"—to be "saints"—to be "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty"—to be "the elect of God through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth"—to be "the faithful in Christ Jesus." And there is not the slightest intimation concerning the membership of baptized infant children.

In the progress of these discourses, it has been shown, it is hoped, that *immersion* is *essential* to Christian baptism—that *infant* baptism cannot be defended, either from the Scriptures of the New Testament, or from analogy, or from antiquity; while *the baptism of believers only* is demanded by the spirituality of the gospel dispensation, by the design of the ordinance, and especially and absolutely

by the terms of Christ's commission. I conclude with some practical observations.

And, in the first place, let me address those who have already submitted themselves to the ordinance of baptism, according to Christ's appointment.

It is our happiness, my brethren, to feel an unshaken confidence, that we are standing on scriptural ground. We have known our Master's will, and we have been baptized. We have found that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. In obeying, we have had a sweet consciousness of his approbation. And when, from time to time, we have had occasion to gather around the baptismal waters, we have had some awakening of salutary recollections, some renewing of solemn vows, some increase of faith, some foretaste of the glory that shall be revealed. Happy, thrice happy would it be for our own souls, for the church of Christ, for the honor of our Lord in this ordinance, and for a perishing world, were we to recur constantly to first principles, and always bear in mind *the obligations of the baptized.*

"Did I say, we have known our Master's will? Yes, brethren, we have known it. We have been convinced, that we, being dead *to* sin, as he died a sacrifice *for* sin, should, in our baptism, acknowledge ourselves obligated to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to rise to a new and holy life, as he, to whose sufferings we owe our deliverance from

sin and condemnation, rose from the dead, and as we hope for a glorious resurrection, when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound. We have acknowledged our obligations. Heaven and earth have witnessed. Christians living in error on this subject, and attached, as men naturally are, to what has been handed down from their fathers, have marked us, and the men of the world have marked us. They have observed our lives. And have we never heard the keen reproach, What do ye more than others? Ah, my brethren! if it were only a slander, we could bear it. He who has loved us and died for us, has taught us to endure patiently the unfavorable opinions and representations of men. "Blessed are ye, when men shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely* for my sake." But when he himself, our Lord and Master,—into whose death we have been baptized, casts on us the grieved and piercing look which he cast on Peter, when he denied him, and asks, What do ye more than others?—we can only go out and weep bitterly.

"From his throne on high he looks down this day on all the baptized; he looks down on us, and seems to say: '*I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.* To you I have given to know my will, and to hope for eternal life, through my death. Into my death, ye have been baptized. Created anew, ye have been set forth as alive from the dead. From the waters of baptism, ye have come

forth, as citizens of heaven, to sojourn awhile on earth, that ye may show to all the purity and power of my gospel, being yourselves examples of all that is lovely and of good report, in all the relations and conditions of life. It is yours to endure as seeing Him who is invisible; and to shed around you an influence that shall continually evince your heavenly birth. To you I have looked to be first and foremost in promoting the interests of my kingdom. Where are ye, at this eventful period? Are ye duly mindful of what is implied in your baptism? Are ye truly and faithfully doing your utmost for that cause for which I became poor, and suffered *unto death, even the death of the cross*? Are ye dead to sin? Are ye living and laboring, not for yourselves, but for me; for the riches and honors, not of earth, but of heaven? 'Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.' To you I have intrusted the vindicating of my wisdom and goodness in the institution of baptism, by exemplifying in your lives its holy tendency. Vain are all other vindications, without this. My command will not be obeyed. Men will misunderstand and neglect baptism, and cling to their own substitutions and traditions. *Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Ye that have been baptized into my death, must rise from the dead, in a better than the literal sense of the words. Wherever ye are, ye must stand forth, witnesses alive indeed from the dead,

walking in newness of life, and presenting, every day and every hour, a lovely, practical demonstration of the import and utility of baptism—of the baptism which I have commanded. Ye must, every one of you, become a book, of unanswerable arguments and eloquent expostulations—a living epistle from my own hand, known and read of all men. So will ye honor me and my command. So will baptism be restored to the place and the purposes for which I ordained it as the initiatory rite, marking the boundary between the world dead in sin, and the church alive to God, ascribing the spiritual life of the believer to my death, and whenever it is administered, proclaiming to all, by an emblem more expressive than words, that 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'" *

With regard to those of my hearers, who hope they love the Saviour, and desire to keep his commandments, but have never been buried with their Lord in baptism, let me ask, what doth hinder you, my brethren, to arise and be baptized? If any dependence can be placed on our investigations into the meaning of language, and if the language of the Bible is to be understood according to the universal laws of interpretation, has it not been made evident, beyond reasonable doubt, *that the religious immersion of a believer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,* AND THAT ONLY, *is the baptism, prescribed by Christ to his followers?*

* Prof. Chase's Sermon.

Why then, will you not keep his commandments? Are you still unsatisfied? Have you not, then, reason to fear for yourselves, that you are under the influence of unhappy prejudices? I, too, have felt their power. I have writhed under the agony of the stricture with which they bound me. When the providence of God compelled me to enter on the inquiries which resulted in a change of views, I was wrapt in prepossessions against the Baptists, strong as armor of triple brass. I cherished a spirit of proud indifference, not to say contempt, totally opposed to the temper of the candid inquirer after the will of Christ. Possibly, my friends, a similar spirit may have possessed you. But the demon must be cast out, or the Saviour will not smile on your search after truth.

And now, though the evidence seems to be opposed to your long-cherished opinions, are there difficulties in your mind, yet to be removed? Do you ask, "If Pedo-baptists are in error, why are they so much blessed of God?" I answer, Why is the religion of Mohammed permitted to spread its triumphs over some of the fairest portions of the globe? Why is Popery allowed to extend itself over one half the Christian world? We cannot tell. Why are some churches holding error among ourselves, prospered? If you are a Presbyterian, I ask, why are our Methodist brethren favored of God, while they reject the important doctrines of election, and the persever-

ance of the saints? If you are a Methodist, I inquire, why are Presbyterians distinguished by the favor of heaven, while they embrace such pernicious errors as election and the saints' perseverance? We cannot answer these questions. It is not for us to decide how great may be the errors of churches, and yet God shall prosper them *for the sake of the truth which they do hold.* The fact is, the Lord bestows his blessing on individuals, churches, and denominations, in proportion to their regard for those doctrines which are fundamental to salvation—*in proportion to their real piety.* Nor is it by any means true, as the objection seems to assume, that the Baptists have not been visited by the smiles of the King in Zion. Without creed or catechism, without general Assemblies, or other high judicatories of the church, without archbishops or bishops, they have walked together harmoniously, uniting with each other in efforts to extend Christ's kingdom, till they embrace in their churches a larger body of believers, with one exception, than any other denomination in the United States. Baptists also have taken the lead in MODERN MISSIONS, having sent the first missionaries to India. With them originated the Monthly Concert of prayer for the conversion of the world. With them also originated the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was the parent of the American Bible Society. They have also prepared a translation of the entire Bible for the millions of Burmah, and

for the hundreds of millions in China. The Baptists also have some sources of happiness, to which their brethren of other denominations are strangers. While they, equally with others, delight in the early dedication of their children to the Saviour, and while they act in firm reliance on the divine promises of a blessing on their efforts to train up their offspring for God, they have a great advantage in being permitted, of their own free choice, publicly to consecrate themselves to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the way of the divine appointment. In the primitive and scriptural mode of doing this, they also find superior instruction and edification.

But do you say, you "*cannot feel close communion to be right.*" But no matter whether you *feel* it to be right, or not: that is not the question. The question is this, *Is* close communion right? *If it be required by the gospel,* it must be maintained, at whatever sacrifice of feeling. Before I proceed with this objection, I will make a single remark: the subject of strict communion, though usually the first, *ought to be the last point* which should engage the attention of a candid inquirer. In considering the subject of baptism, the *first* topic of consideration should be, *what is Christian baptism?* The second particular is, *what persons may receive the ordinance?* When these two points are established in the mind, according to the Scriptures, then, *and not till then,* may the objection now before us engage the atten-

tion. The subject of *communion,* important and deeply interesting as it is, *must not enter the mind at all,* till the subjects involved in the preceding interrogations are disposed of. A reflecting, logical mind, will not entertain a thought respecting it, till it has obtained satisfaction on the other points. To think of it, while the investigation into the other topics is in progress, will only fill the mind with prejudice, warp the judgment, and lead to erroneous conclusions. To proceed in reply to the objection. The case stands thus: The Baptists believe, *that no unbaptized person should be admitted to the Lord's supper.* This opinion they hold in common with the mass of Christians, of all denominations. They also believe, as peculiar to them, *that nothing but the immersion of a believer on a profession of his faith,* is Christian baptism. They cannot, therefore, receive to the communion of the Lord's table, any person who has not been immersed on a profession of faith And in this they act precisely as do their brethren of other denominations. Will *Presbyterian* ministers receive to their communion persons who have never been baptized? Certainly not. If an applicant, of undoubted piety, ask admission to the supper, while, in the judgment of the Pedo-baptist minister presiding, he has never received baptism, his request will not be granted. Nor will it alter the case, should the candidate have submitted himself to some rite, which he himself conscientiously believed to be baptism. If,

for example, a person should be sprinkled *with blood* instead of water, believing *that* to be a sufficient baptism, the administrator of the ordinance would assuredly reject his application. The *minister who presides at the table of the Lord,* is *always the judge*, whose prerogative it is to decide, whether the candidate possesses the qualifications prescribed by the Lord Jesus as requisite for admission to the sacred feast. If an applicant comes forward, who, in the officiating minister's opinion, has not been baptized, he will be refused. *But the Baptists do no more than this.* They cordially invite to the table all believers who have been baptized, and withhold the invitation from those only who, in their opinion, have never received gospel baptism. Do they then merit censure? Before you can justly complain, you must satisfy them, either that something beside immersion is baptism, or that baptism is not an indispensable pre-requisite to the Lord's supper. Having learned the evidence on which Baptists ground their views, you will hardly undertake the former part of the alternative; if you assume the latter part, you appear in opposition to almost the whole Christian world.

"But do you not believe, that Pedo-baptists are sincere?" Yes, but sincerity will not justify us in a breach of the divine rule.

"How can you fellowship Christians and Christian ministers, in prayer, praise, and preaching, and yet not admit them to the communion?" For this, we have scriptural au-

thority in the exhortation of Paul: "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." We have attained to an agreement in praying to the same God and Father of all; and also in preaching the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ; but we have not attained to an agreement re-respecting the subjects and mode of baptism, nor in the visible qualifications of communicants at the Lord's table.

"But do you not, by your course, *unchurch* other denominations, and say they are not churches of Christ?" We do not say, they are not churches of Christ. True, distinguished Pedo-baptists have said, "*where there is no baptism, there are no visible churches;*" * but we regard it as sufficient for us to say of those brethren who do not administer the ordinance according to the law of Christ's kingdom, that *their churches are not regularly constituted.*

"But if we cannot commune together on earth, how can we in heaven?" This objection appeals to some of the worst passions of depraved human nature. It assumes that Baptists arrogate to themselves some superiority over their brethren, and expect the highest rewards of heaven. It supposes we are deficient in those sentiments of fraternal affection, which the members of Christ's family should ever cherish towards one another; and

* Dr. Griffin.

it further supposes, that the inter-communion of the saints in glory, is regulated by the same laws which govern the churches of Christ on earth. Never was assumption more unjust—never were suppositions more destitute of support. Though firmly persuaded that our views of the ordinances are framed upon the scriptural model, yet we are deeply conscious that in every thing we come short, and when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. Towards our fellow Christians who differ from us, we wish to feel emotions of the most fervent brotherly love, and it is our heart's desire, to see them walking in the truth, and delighting themselves in the law of the Lord.

In regard to the latter of the suppositions above named, the following considerations may aid in removing injurious prejudices. "In the admission of members to the celestial church, Christ acts as a sovereign: in the admission of members to Christian churches on earth, we must act as servants—yielding implicit, undeviating obedience to the directions of our sovereign Lord. The communion of saints in heaven will not consist in partaking the symbols of Christ's death, but in high and spiritual intercourse, in mutual expressions of admiration and gratitude, while reviewing the dispensations of providence and grace towards them in this world; in mingled songs of praise to Him who hath washed them from their sins in his own blood; and in exalted converse concerning the glorious scenes, which the revolu-

tions of eternity will be continually unfolding to their delighted gaze. Such communion all good men may enjoy, in a more humble manner, in this world, without ever sitting together at the table of our Lord—thus having an antepast of their communion in the skies."

Do not then, Christian brother, permit your prejudices to represent strict communion as an odious peculiarity, repugnant to the spirit of the gospel; but go thou, and do the bidding of thy Lord and Master.

But do you further inquire, "How can the great and good men, whose opinions have been quoted as favorable to Baptist views, still practise the sprinkling of infants?" I answer, *I cannot tell:* nor am I bound to explain the manifest contradiction between their premises and their conclusions; between their principles and their practice. The stern inveteracy of long-cherished prejudices, and the circumstances in which some of them are placed, —being under governments where dissent from the established religion would be instantly followed by loss of place, of honor, wealth, and liberty—may aid us to discover an apology, if not a justification, of their course. It may also be remembered, that while these eminent men deserve the highest confidence, where learning and research are demanded; while the ablest professors in our colleges sit as youthful disciples at their feet, the humblest Christian in the American churches, in respect of a pure love to Christ, and a desire to do his

will, may be far in advance of the proudest scholars of Europe. While, therefore, we properly avail ourselves of the light shed by their labors upon the language, literature, and antiquities of the Bible, we must *not* imitate their adherence to usages which are the inventions of men, not the prescriptions of God. They are beacons which pour their radiance upon the path, while they move not along the line; but WE must delight TO RUN *in the way of Christ's commandments.*

Again; do you urge, "Why trouble one's self so much about a question of *much* water, or of *little* water?" It is *not* "a question of much water, or of little water." The controversy on this subject, relates to *what is Christian baptism, and to whom is the ordinance to be administered.* Suppose we could see no *reason* for having "*much*" water, rather than "*little*," still we should not be at liberty, from mere personal considerations, without reference to the will of Christ, to substitute sprinkling for immersion. But there *is good* reason for employing so "much" water as to immerse the body. This we have seen in remarking upon the meaning and utility of the rite. If baptism were designed to intimate only the necessity of the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, then, indeed, a smaller quantity of water might be emblematical of this truth. Even in this case, however, if the Christian felt his *entire* depravity, his *utter* defilement from the sole of the foot to the crown

of the head, and desired to be '*thoroughly* washed' from his iniquity, he might crave the entire immersion of the person in the waters of baptism, as symbolical of the universal cleansing, which he sought by the influences of the Holy Ghost. And when we find, that in addition to the idea of internal purity, the Holy Scriptures represent baptism as an emblem of the burial and resurrection of Christ, and of our own resurrection both literal and figurative, we cannot but feel, that *immersion* belongs *essentially* to the nature of the ordinance, and when men sprinkle a 'little' water upon the face, they practise an unwarranted substitution.

I repeat, it is not "a question of much water or of little water." It is a question relating to the proper subjects of baptism. If the views exhibited in these discourses are correct, it follows, that those who practise the sprinkling of infants, not only strip the ordinance of baptism of the meaning and instruction which its Divine Author has connected with it, but they act on a principle, which would banish believers' baptism out of the world! Is it a matter of no importance, that the traditions of men should make void an ordinance of God? Shall Baptists be accused of narrow views, of bigotry and superstition, because they are desirous to rescue an institution of the Lord Jesus Christ from perpetual exile, and from utter destruction?

It is not "a question of much or of little

water." The New Testament every where treats men as acting for themselves in matters of religion, and as responsible for their own acts. One man cannot repent for another, or believe for another. The language of the Scriptures to each son and daughter of Adam is, Repent thou, believe thou; and, believe thou and be baptized. The religion of the son cannot save the father, nor can the religion of the father save the son. Every person must engage for himself to serve the Lord —every one must act for himself. But the language of infant baptism is diametrically opposite to this language of Scripture. It says, the father can covenant for the child, the father can act for him. The act of the parent shall answer for his offspring—the faith of the parent shall save the child! Says an eminent Pedo-baptist minister, A Christian parent, who uses the ordinance of infant baptism aright, "may be sure, that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls has written the name of that child before him, in letters which his infinite forbearance and mercy will long keep from being blotted out, though the child should perversely break his father's covenant." "If the parents die while the child is young, the remembrance of its dedication to God, and the confident belief that it was received into his covenant, will help them to look at it from the dying pillow with peace."*

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* "The Baptized Child. By Nehemiah Adams, Pastor of Essex Street Church Boston, 1836."

As exhibited in these extracts, is not infant baptism manifestly at war with the great doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH? This teaches, that *faith*, one's *own* faith, not another's,—*faith*, not *works*, either his own or another's, shall save a man. Shall the Baptists be charged with bigotry, for endeavoring to uphold a doctrine on which the great Apostle of the Gentiles has so strenuously insisted, as fundamental to the Christian system?

I need say nothing of the fatal influence of the views I am examining on multitudes of careless adults, who are encouraged in a life of impenitence, by complacently dwelling on the covenant made with God on their behalf, when their parents presented them for baptism. From their infancy, they have been accustomed to reflect, that they have received "the seal of the covenant," have been "made members of Christ," and "children of God," having been "regenerated with the Holy Spirit." Is it strange, that such persons should feel themselves safe, and at liberty to continue in sin?

It is not, then, I reiterate, a question "of *much* water, or of *little* water." It is a question, whether men shall lay unhallowed hands on an ordinance of the great Head of the church, and profanely strip it of its significance and its teachings—whether they shall strike down, in the temple of gospel truth, the noble pillar of justifying faith—whether they shall lift from the sinner's conscience, a weight of

personal responsibility, laid there by the Lord Jesus himself—whether they shall abrogate a law of the King of saints:—or whether they shall keep the ordinances, as they have been delivered in the Statute Book of Heaven, revering the will of the Sovereign, and observing all things whatsoever he hath commanded, *exactly as* he hath commanded.

Is it suggested, that "Baptists do not believe in the divine authority of the Old Testament?" This allegation is the offspring of an ignorance that demands our pity. For a refutation, consult the writings of Andrew Fuller, and other eminent divines of the denomination. Their ministers also select texts indiscriminately from the Old Testament and the New.

But do you plead, that "Baptists attach too much importance to the ordinance of baptism?" I might reply, Pedo-baptists attach too *little* importance to it. When individuals are led to inquire respecting the mind of Christ, do not even ministers endeavor to quiet their uneasiness, by telling them, the subject is of no consequence"—"it is a mere external ceremony" —"it is not worth while to trouble one's self about it." When young converts are seeking to know the will of their Lord, respecting the ordinances of his church, do not their spiritual guides often ply them with "dissuasives" from investigation? Do not parents endeavor to restrain their children from examination, because it is pleasant to have all the children in the same church with the parents? Are there not

numbers who will not listen to a sermon on the subject? And do not even theological students, while pursuing their studies, content themselves with a partial view of the matter, forming their conclusions without reading a single Baptist author? And how happens it, that the scriptural mode of administration is, in many places, fallen into disrepute? How happens it, that immersion, confessedly practised by the apostles, and by the entire church for many centuries, is now covered with obloquy, "as unsuited to the manners of a polished age?" Do not all these things show, that many Pedo-baptists attach too little importance to this Christian ordinance? And, if this state of things continue, may it not soon be true, with regard to baptism, as it now is of the Lord's supper, that multitudes of adults will be admitted to the ordinance, without any pretensions to piety?

But, let me ask, *how* important do Baptists believe this rite to be? I answer, they do *not* consider it a *saving* ordinance. With other Christians, they believe, that all the waters of Jordan, all the waves of the ocean, are unavailing to wash away sin. *Except a man be born of God*, his baptism will profit him nothing as a passport to heaven. But while they *do not* regard the ordinance as essential to salvation, *they do believe it to be essential to obedience to the law of Christ*, respecting the introduction of members into the visible church. They believe, the ordinance of bap-

tism should be observed, in the way of Christ's appointment. True, it is only an external rite, but it is a rite enjoined by Christ himself—it *is a rite full of meaning*. And as any rite is but a form, if we do not preserve the form we do not practise the rite. Hence, immersion is essential to baptism. Hence, baptism by immersion is essential to obedience to Christ; essential to the highest instruction and comfort of believers; essential to the best moral impression on unbelievers; essential to the purity and stability of the church of Christ.

But, as we are supposed to lay an unwarrantable stress on baptism, let us see what importance is attached to the ordinance by others.

Mr. Barnes, Note on Mark 16: 16. "It is worthy of remark, that Jesus has made *baptism* of so much importance. He did *not* say, indeed, that a man *could not* be saved without baptism, but he has strongly implied, that where this is neglected, *knowing it to be a command of the Saviour*, it endangers the salvation of the soul. *Faith and baptism* are the beginnings of the Christian life: the one, the beginning of piety *in the soul*; the other, of its manifestation *before men*, or of a *profession* of religion. And no man can tell how much he endangers his eternal interests by being ashamed of Christ before men."

Does the objection come from Episcopalians? And what stress do they lay upon baptism? In their catechism, to the question, "How many sacraments hath Christ ordained

in his church?"—they answer, "Two only, as *generally necessary to salvation*—that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord." After the baptism of an infant, the minister is instructed to say, "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, *that this child is regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits." And then follows a part of the Thanksgiving: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee *to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit*, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church." Before confirmation the baptized child is required to learn a catechism. The following question and answer will show, that he is taught to regard baptism in the same important light.

"Who gave you this name?" "My sponsors in baptism; *wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*"

Does the charge come from the Presbyterians? And what stress do they place upon baptism?

In their Confession of Faith, they say, "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only as a solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also, *to be unto him a sign and* SEAL *of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins.*"

Does the objection proceed from Congregationalists? And what stress do they lay on the ordinance? Hear Dr. Dwight. "When children die in infancy, and are scripturally dedicated to God in baptism, there is much and very consoling reason to believe, that they are accepted beyond the grave." He further says: "There is, I think, reason to hope well concerning other children dying in infancy; but there is certainly *peculiar reason* for Christian parents to entertain strong consolation with regard to their offspring." Here Dr. Dwight evidently supposes *baptism powerfully to contribute* to the salvation of infants. For language still more remarkable, refer to the extract from the "Baptized Child," given on a preceding page.

Is the objection made by Methodists? And what stress is placed upon the institution by them? Hear the celebrated John Wesley, the founder of Methodism: "*By baptism*, we, who were the children of wrath, are made the children of God. And this regeneration, which our church in so many places ascribes to baptism, is more than barely being admitted into the church, though commonly connected therewith. Being grafted into the body of Christ's church, we are made the children of God, by adoption and grace. By water, as the means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated, or born again: whence it is called by the apostles, the washing of regeneration. In all ages, the outward baptism is a means of the inward.

Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, a kingdom which cannot be moved. In the ordinary way, there *is no other means of entering into the church, or into heaven.* If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, seeing, in the ordinary way, *they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism.*"

After these quotations, can any one charge the *Baptists* with attaching too much importance to the ordinance of baptism? Whatever the language employed in these extracts may mean, I have never met, in any Baptist writer, expressions so extravagant.

But do you fear that a change of views on account of baptism, will expose you to the imputation of "thinking more of external rites, than of internal holiness; of paying tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, while you neglect weightier matters?" But is it true, as a matter of fact, that Baptists esteem the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and the indispensable duties of piety, *less* than those who differ from them? Are they not equally attached to the doctrines of the entire depravity of the natural heart, the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, the atonement by the blood of Christ? And may not a Christian be desirous to keep the ordinances of the Lord blameless, and at the same time, earnestly long after inward conformity to the Saviour? What if baptism *is* an "external rite?" Is it not enjoined by Him

who says, "If ye love me, *keep my* commandments?" And is not every command of Christ of equal authority? May you select certain of his commands, and yield *them* obedience, while you neglect others? Or must you keep *all* his statutes? What if baptism be "not essential to salvation?" Will you observe only those precepts, the neglect of which would ruin your soul? Can you not act from *love* to the Saviour; and will you do nothing in obedience to him, unless you are certain disobedience will be punished with everlasting destruction? Admit, that in comparison with faith and repentance, baptism is as the mint, anise, and cummin, compared with the weightier matters of the law, yet it deserves to be remembered, that the tithes of these small herbs *must be paid* as truly as the tenths of the larger; and under the old dispensation, the wilful omission to present these before the Lord, would have been visited with the divine judgments. "BRING," then, my brethren, "BRING ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE," and see what God will do for your souls.

And now, "Who is on the Lord's side?" "Arise and be baptized for the remission of sins."

But do you still plead, "I am too far advanced in years, to trouble myself respecting this matter?" *Too old* to obey your Saviour! Many venerable men, and women too, have not thought themselves too old to be tortured

on the rack, or to be burnt at the stake, rather than break the commandments of the Saviour they loved.

"I should dishonor the memory of my parents, if I were to renounce the baptism of my infancy." If you are satisfied that the direction of our Saviour is to all, "*Believe and be baptized,*" you are *now* dishonoring HIM by refusing publicly to avow your attachment to him, according to the methods prescribed in his word. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." "And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

And now, brethren, do not stigmatize me as a disturber of the peace of churches, and a divider of Christ's house. Believing, before God, the religious immersion of a believer, and that ONLY, to be Christian baptism, how can I do otherwise than remonstrate and exhort, warn and entreat? And if the views presented in these discourses are agreeable to the Scriptures, why should you cry peace, peace! when there is *no* peace—truth, truth! when there is *no* truth? It is the duty of those who admit immersion to be the primitive and scriptural mode of baptism, to profess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as dead, buried, and risen for their salvation, *by being buried with him by baptism.* And if any entertain doubts respecting the lawfulness of giving the sacred rite to unconscious babes, it becomes them to reflect, whether with a good con-

science, they can still countenance a practice which abolishes the baptism of believers, and thus sets aside an ordinance of Christ. And, finally, EXAMINATION is the duty of ALL, an impartial, thorough, prayerful examination. If my brethren can enter on such an examination without prejudice, and pursue it in the fear of God, the result will not be doubtful. *

May the Lord Jesus, of his infinite mercy, baptize us all with the Holy Ghost, sanctifying us for his service on earth, and for "the communion of saints" in glory.—Amen.

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* A Baptist minister of western Virginia, within the last four years, has baptized over two hundred persons, who had already been members of Pedo-baptist churches. An aged minister now residing in Mississippi, has, at various times, buried with Christ in baptism, more than four hundred persons of this class, of whom forty were Pedo-baptist *ministers!*

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